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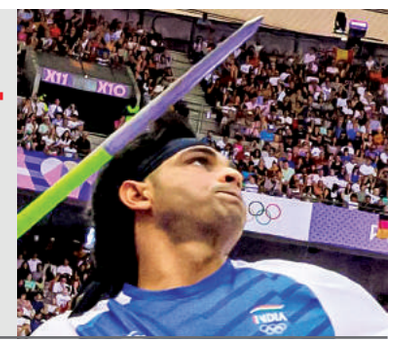

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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Hasina stays in India as UK refuses asylum

UK calls for UN probe into B'desh turmoil; she might fly to UAE, US, Saudi or Qatar

Ex-PM Sheikh Hasina, accompanied by her sister Sheikh Rehana, planned to leave for London from India **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Former Bangladesh prime minister Sheikh Hasina's plan to travel to London has hit a roadblock over some "uncertainties" and she is unlikely to move out of India for the next couple of days, people familiar with the matter said on Tuesday.

Hasina, who landed at the Hindon airbase on Monday in a C-130J military transport aircraft hours after resigning as the prime minister, has been shifted to an unspecified location under tight security, they said.

Hasina, accompanied by her sister Sheikh Rehana, planned to leave for London from India to take temporary refuge but the option is not being pursued now. This is after the UK government indicated that she may not get legal protection against any possible probe into the massive violent protests in her country, they said.

Hasina decided to travel to London as Rehana's daughter Tulip Siddiq is a member of the British Parliament. British foreign secretary David Lammy said in London on Monday that Bangladesh has seen unprecedented levels of violence and tragic loss of life in the last two weeks and people of the country "deserve a full and independent UN-led investigation into the events".

Though Hasina, who is accompanied by her sister Sheikh Rehana, wanted to travel to London, the UK is understood to have conveyed that it is unlikely to heed to her request for asylum. Following this, she is considering several options including the UAE, the US, Belarus, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Finland, said a source.

While saying that Hasina's travel plans have hit certain issues and she may stay in the country for the next couple of days, the people also described the situation as dynamic with no definitive path or clarity on the matter.

The 76-year-old who ruled the South Asian country with an iron fist for 15 years, resigned as the prime minister following the massive protests that initially began as an agitation against a job quota scheme but weeks later morphed into a mass movement demanding her ouster from power. —*PTI*

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INDIA ASKS HASINA TO STAY TILL TRAVEL PLANS FINALISED

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

India is "deeply concerned" over the situation in Bangladesh, especially about the status of the minority communities, and is in regular touch with authorities in Dhaka, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Tuesday, a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and landed at the Hindon airbase near Delhi.

It is learnt that New Delhi has conveyed to 76-year-old Hasina that she can stay in India till her travel plans for taking refuge in another country is finalised.

In India's first reaction to the dramatic developments in Bangladesh, Jaishankar, in suo-motu statements in both houses of Parliament, said Hasina decided to resign after a meeting with leaders of the security establishment and requested for approval "at very short notice" to come to India "for the moment".

Top sources said India has already reached out to the new dispensation in Dhaka and sought safety and well-being of over 10,000 Indians presently residing in Bangladesh.

In his remarks in Parliament, Jaishankar said India-Bangladesh relations have been "exceptionally close" for many decades over many governments.

Delving into the developments leading up to Hasina's resignation following weeks of students' protests, he said New Delhi had "repeatedly counselled restraint and urged that the situation be diffused through dialogue". —*PTI*

According to media reports, at least 119 people have been killed in the last two days of violence across Bangladesh **PHOTO: PTI**

Nobel winner Muhammad Yunus to lead interim govt after Hasina ouster

DHAKA, 6 AUG

Nobel winner Muhammad Yunus said on Tuesday he was ready to head an interim government in Bangladesh after the leaders of the Students Against Discrimination on urged him for it.

In a video posted on social media early Tuesday morning, Nahid Islam, one of the key coordinators of the movement, said they have already talked with 84-year-old Yunus, who has agreed to take the responsibility to save Bangladesh.

Yunus is currently out of the country but welcomed the ouster of Hasina's regime, describing the development as the "second liberation" of the country.

Yunus won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his anti-poverty campaign through the Grameen Bank, a mode; which was replicated across continents.

He had been in a protracted row with Hasina's government due to obscure reasons while authorities initiated a series of investigations against him after she came to power in 2008.

Bangladesh authorities launched a review of the statutory Grameen Bank's activities in 2011 and fired Yunus as its founding managing director on charges of violating the government retirement regulation.

He was charged under dozens of cases. In January, Yunus was sentenced to six months in jail by a court on charges of labour law violation.

—*PTI*

DEATH TOLL CLIMBS TO 440 IN B'DESH

The death toll in the anti-government protests in Bangladesh on Tuesday climbed to 440, with 100 more deaths reported after Sheikh Hasina fled the country. At least 24 people were burnt alive last night in a hotel owned by a leader of Awami League in western Joshor district, hospital sources said. Bengali language daily Prothom Alo reported that at least 109 people were killed in clashes after Monday. —*PTI*

Electric bus catches fire on flooded road in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

A Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus caught fire near Miniature Circuit Breaker (MCB) late Monday night. The bus was travelling from Tin Factory to Goraguntepalya and leased from JBM group under the Bengaluru Smart City Project. Talking to Salar News the Public Relations Officer of BMTC Sunitha B Jayappa said, "The vehicle stopped suddenly on a waterlogged road near Kempapura. The driver, Dasharath, and conductor, Narasimha Raju, discovered smoke emanating from the rear side of the bus." The Assistant Commissioner of Police Pradeep BU, "The electric bus went into two feet of water, causing water to enter the battery, resulting in a short circuit and subsequent fire." —*Salar News*

ISRO to launch Earth Observation Satellite-8 on 15 Aug

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

The Earth Observation Satellite-8 (EOS-8) is likely to be launched on 15 August, ISRO sources said on Tuesday. The EOS-8 will be launched by the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)-D3, at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh," sources told PTI. The primary objectives of the EOS-08 mission include designing and developing a microsatellite, creating payload instruments compatible with the microsatellite bus, and incorporating new technologies required for future operational satellites, ISRO said in a statement. Built on the Microsat/IMS-1 bus, EOS-08 carries three payloads: Electro Optical Infrared Payload, Global Navigation Satellite System-Reflectometry payload, and SiC UV Dosimeter.—*PTI*

26 drunk school bus drivers nabbed in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

The Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) conducted a special drive and registered 26 drunk driving cases involving school bus drivers who were on duty. The traffic police checked 3,676 school buses during the early hours from 7 am to 9:30 am. The BTP appealed to school authorities and parents to remain vigilant and report any instances of reckless driving to the authorities. Additionally, BTP registered 911 cases of various traffic violations, collecting Rs. 4.62 lakh in fines. Offence included refusing hire, demanding excess fare, defective silencers, using black film, signal jumping, wrong parking, no entry/against one-way, footpath parking and triple riding. —*Salar News*

Vinesh one step away from Gold

PARIS, 6 AUG

Vinesh Phogat (50kg) became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the final of the Olympic Games with a convincing 5-0 win over Cuba's Yusneylis Guzman Lopez here on Tuesday.

With this win in the semifinal, Vinesh guaranteed herself at least a silver medal. Both wrestlers got off to a cautious start but a passivity clock on Lopez meant that Vinesh got on the board with one technical point after the Cuban didn't take a risk.

Vinesh was leading 1-0 at the end of the first period. She extended her dominance in the second period with four more points to seal the bout in her favour.

Phogat will face United State's Sarah Hildebrandt in the final today. Earlier, Phogat beat omen's 50kg freestyle wrestling event by beating Ukraine's three-time CWG gold-medallist Oksana Livach 7-5 at the Paris Olympics on Tuesday.

Vinesh Phogat became the first Indian woman wrestler to reach the final of the Olympic Games **PHOTOs: X**

"With the world champion out, I thought I will now have a better chance. Vinesh was very strong, I tried to fight but I made a few mistakes," said Livach after her close 5-7 defeat against Vinesh.

Livach made a comeback in the second period when she went for a double-leg attack. Vinesh had Livach in her grip and was awarded another point for control.

Defending champion Neeraj Chopra turned on the style as he stormed into the men's javelin throw final of the Olympic Games with a season's best effort of 89.34m in his very first attempt in the qualification round here on Tuesday.

—*PTI*

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GIRL 7 MONTHS PREGNANT

B'luru influencer arrested for raping school girl

BENGALURU/ CHIKKABALLAPUR, 6 AUG

DJ Halli police arrested a social media influencer on Tuesday for allegedly raping a 15-year-old schoolgirl.

The accused, Saad Musaibna, lured the girl with promises of love and introduced her to his mother and sister. He repeatedly took her to his house and raped her multiple times.

When the girl was taken to hospital after she complained of stomach pain, it was found that she was 7 months pregnant, an Inspector with DJ Halli police told Salar News. When the girl's father confronted him, Musaibna threatened him and even assaulted the girl, who later tried to commit suicide. The girl's parents have alleged that Saad exploited at least 8 schoolgirls in the same way. The father has filed a complaint against Musaibna, his mother and sister, accusing them of threatening their lives.

Man held for raping mom

Ashoka, resident of Chinnahalli village in Hassan was held by Gudibande police for allegedly raping his 60-year-old mother on Sunday. Ashoka, a driver by profession is a habitual drunkard and used to quarrel with his parents often. He began a quarrel on Sunday night with his parents and fed his father alcohol and consumed alcohol himself in their home. Later he started quarrelling with his mother and undressed himself in front of the other family members. He dragged his mother to a nearby and forced himself upon her. He allegedly attacked his father too. Gudibande police have arrested the accused and was sent to judicial custody. —*Salar News*

Tim Walz **PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA**

KAMALA PICKS TIM WALZ AS RUNNING MATE

WASHINGTON, 6 AUG

US Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, has formally secured the Democratic presidential nomination and chose Minnesota Gov Tim Walz as her running mate on Tuesday.

Walz has served 12 years in Congress before he became Minnesota governor in 2018. Earlier last month, Harris abruptly thrust into the role of presidential candidate after President Joe Biden withdrew from the race for the White House.

The next steps in the nominating process include the certification of the roll call by the Democratic National Convention (DNC) secretary Jason Rae, and the acceptance of the nomination by Harris and her running mate, certified by DNC Chair (DNCC) Minyon Moore. The Convention is to be held in Chicago from 19 to 22 August.

"With the support of 99 per cent of all participating delegates in the virtual roll call, Vice President Harris has historic momentum at her back as we embark on the final steps in officially certifying her as our party's nominee,' DNC chair Jaime Harrison and DNCC chair Minyon Moore said in a joint statement. However, Trump's campaign team is working to frame Walz as a "another left-wing extremist" who was put on the Democratic ticket to aid Harris' progressive agenda.

—*PTI/ BBC News*

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Market crash: Investors' wealth erodes by Rs 22L cr

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Investors' wealth eroded by a whopping Rs 22 lakh crore in three days of market slump with the BSE benchmark Sensex tanking 4 per cent.

In three days, the Sensex tumbled 3,274.48 points or 3.99 per cent. The massive correction came after the benchmark index hit its all-time high of 82,129.49 on August 1.

Market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms tumbled Rs 22,02,996.27 crore to reach Rs 4,39,59,953.56 crore (USD 5.24 trillion) in three trading days.

On Monday, the Sensex plummeted 2,222.55 points or 2.74 per cent to settle at 78,759.40. During the day, it tanked 2,686.09 points or 3.31 per cent to 78,295.86.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

Meanwhile, Congress on Tuesday slammed Centre over the rupee slumping to an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar and said this was a clear indication of the government's "economic blunders" and "mismanagement".—*PTI*

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30% FOR PRIVATE

Hajj Committee to now handle 70% quota

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Out of the total Hajj pilgrims quota allocated to India, 70 per cent would be handled by the Haj Committee of India while the remaining 30 per cent will be allocated to private Haj Group Organisers, according to the government's Haj Policy for 2025.

In 2024, the Hajj Committee of India (HCoI) was allotted 80 per cent while the private Haj Group Organisers got 20 per cent of the quota.

While the order of priority was 70 plus applicants, ladies travelling without mehrams (LWM) and the general category in 2024, the new Hajj policy has prioritised 65 plus applicants followed by ladies without mehrams and then the general category.

In the 2024 policy, which was a continuation of the 2023 policy, a companion was a must for 70 plus age pilgrims.

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

- India and Saudi Arabia last year signed a bilateral agreement under which New Delhi has been allocated a quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims.

The new policy states that pilgrims of 65 years and above will be registered under Reserved Category.

"For non-LWM pilgrims of the age of 65 or above, one companion is allowed who should be immediate relative namely Husband/Wife/Brother/Sister/Son/Daughter/Son-in-law/Daughter-in- law, Grandson/Grand Daughter and Nephew/Niece. No other relation will be allowed to travel as companion," the policy states.

Neither the pilgrim aged 65 or above nor the companion will be allowed to travel alone, it says.

The Government of India and Saudi Arabia sign the Haj Agreement every year in which the number of Hajj seats allocated to India is incorporated.

India and Saudi Arabia last year signed a bilateral agreement under which New Delhi has been allocated a quota of 1,75,025 pilgrims for the annual Hajj pilgrimage in 2024.

—*PTI*

DC teaches school students on Constitution

KOLAR, 6 AUG

Amid his routine administrative work, Kolar Deputy Commissioner Akram Pasha has delivered a lecture on political science and history to the students of Class 10 at Moulana Azad School here. Pasha had worked as a political science lecturer before joining Administrative Services in 2006. On Monday, the IAS officer inspected the facilities at the school. Later, he went to Class 10 where he gave them an hour-long lecture about the history of India and the Constitution. The Deputy Commissioner told the children that the Indian Constitution is one of the best in the world and it provides equal opportunities to all the citizens of the country.—*Salar News*

Kolar university gives ₹1 crore for Wayanad

KOLAR, 6 AUG

A Kolar-based university has contributed Rs 1 crore to relief works at landslide-hit Wayanad. The employees of Sri Devaraj Urs Academy of Higher Education and Research in Kolar donated their one day's salary to raise the amount. The university and Sri Devaraj Urs Educational Trust that runs it handed over the cheque for Rs 1 crore to Kolar Deputy Commissioner Akram Pasha on Tuesday. GH Nagaraj, chairman of the trust, said their employees wished that the people of Wayanad resume their routine life shortly. The Deputy Commissioner said it is appreciable that the trust has come forward to donate Rs 1 crore and such philanthropic works will go a long way in lessening the burden on the Kerala government in taking up relief works.
—*Salar News*

Three with 6,626 seahorses arrested at City airport

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence has busted a racket in smuggling of dried seahorses by arresting three people from Tamil Nadu with 6,626 seahorses at the Kempegowda International Airport here on 3 August, a DRI official said on Tuesday. It's the biggest seizure of (dried) seahorses in recent times. The three passengers have been arrested and are under investigation. All of them are from Tamil Nadu and are in their mid-30s, the official said. According to him, all species of seahorses in India are classified under Schedule-I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, making their sale, purchase, and any form of utilisation illegal and punishable. Furthermore, under Export Policy, the export of wild animals and marine species, including their parts and products, is strictly prohibited. —*PTI*

Governor weighing options on showcause notice to CM

Minister MC Sudhakar, Petitioner TJ Abraham visit Raj Bhavan

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

With the ball now in the Governor's court vis-a-vis the petition seeking sanction for Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's prosecution in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment 'scam', all eyes are on the Raj Bhavan, as to what decision Thaawarchand Gehlot takes.

Based on a petition filed by advocate-activist TJ Abraham, the Governor had issued "showcause notice" on 26 July directing the Chief Minister to submit his reply to the allegations against him within seven days, as to why permission for prosecution should not be granted against him.

Minister of Higher Education MC Sudhakar and Abraham visited the Raj Bhavan and met the Governor separately on Tuesday, sources said. Sudhakar's meeting was to do with issues relating to universities as the Governor is Chancellor, an official said, but did not rule out a discussion regarding the showcause notice.

Abraham said he has "absolutely strong hope" that the prosecution sanction will be given. "It was a fantastic meeting where the Governor wanted to clarify. Sitting for more than three hours, they (the Cabinet) could not answer even one of my allegations against the CM, but they find that I'm guilty of being a bad man," he said.

According to sources, the Governor may be exploring options, including suggesting an independent inquiry into the MUDA scam or seeking a probe report from the Lokayukta, with whom the petitioner Abraham has already filed a complaint -- as granting sanction for prosecution "straightaway now" may lead to a long drawn legal battle.

Meanwhile, the fourth day of the 'Mysuru Chalo' protest by BJP and JD(S) began at Nidaghatta near here and is scheduled to cover a distance of 20km to reach the district headquarters city of Mandya.
—*PTI*

BJP State President BY Vijayendra, LoP R Ashoka and JD(S) Youth President Nikhil Kumaraswamy at 'Mysuru Chalo' rally, in Mandya on Tuesday
PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

DKS: HDK can't keep promises

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar has lashed out at Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy over his "frequent reversals" on promises made to the people of Mandya. "He has to walk the talk and not just make false promises," Shivakumar said at Janandolana programme on Tuesday. He criticised Kumaraswamy for his statements about Mekedatu project, saying the JD(S) leader had claimed that securing approval from Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be swift but he is back-peddling on it.
—*PTI*

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah ***PHOTO: PTI***

Fresh complaint filed with Governor against CM

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

A Mysuru resident has sent a complaint to Governor against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah alleging his involvement in a land allotment scam at Mysore Urban Development Authority (MUDA). This follows a previous complaint sent to Governor Thawarchand Gehlot by TJ Abraham seeking permission to pursue criminal charges against Siddaramaiah.

The latest complaint was filed by Snehamai Krishna, who attached a set of documents on the land allotment with it. Krishna alleged that Siddaramaiah misused his authority to denotify 1.39 acres in Uttanahalli village of Varuna, Mysuru taluk. This land, originally acquired in 1972 to benefit landless and disadvantaged individuals, had remained unused due to a lack of infrastructure.

According to Krishna's complaint, Siddaramaiah requested then district collector to de-notify the land for an individual named Marappa, who had no actual claim to the property for 30 years. The complaint alleged that the district administration subsequently created fraudulent documents to transfer the land to Marappa after a 14-month delay. The original beneficiaries, who had not received their land, raised their concerns in 2011.

Krishna claimed that Siddaramaiah's involvement in this de-notification was illegal and sought the Governor's authorisation to file a formal case against the Chief Minister.

The complaint has sparked a political controversy. Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda criticised the Governor's handling of such matters, pointing out the difference in how similar complaints against other political figures, including Janardhana Reddy and Shashikala Annasaheb Jolle, were managed.
—*Salar News*

Gruha Lakshmi scheme money transfer resumes

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar said State government started crediting money to the beneficiaries of Gruha Lakshmi guarantee scheme on Tuesday.

Hebbalkar said some women had complained to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah that they were not getting the money for the past two months. "Due to some technical glitch, we could not transfer money into the bank accounts of women for June and July," Hebbalkar said during Jan Andolan conference in Mandya. The pending amount of Rs 4,000 will be reflected in the beneficiaries' account from Wednesday.

The minister said funds totalling Rs 533 crore were distributed to around 26.65 lakh women across the State covering the subsidies for June and July of the scheme.

Gruha Lakshmi scheme offers Rs 2,000 to the women heads of families belonging to the economically weaker section. The guarantee, which was one of the key promises of the Congress in the run-up to the Assembly elections last year, was launched on 30 August, 2023, in Mysuru.

Opposition parties had criticised the two-month delay, saying the government was struggling to fulfil its financial commitments. They accused the administration of failure due to its extensive welfare promises.
—*Salar News*

LALBAGH GEARS UP FOR FLOWER SHOW

This year's Independence Day flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden in Bengaluru is themed around the life and works of Dr BR Ambedkar. The 216th edition of the flower show will run from 8 to 19 August and will showcase around 27 lakh flowers. Last-minute preparations are underway for the flower show organised by Horticulture Department. ***PHOTOS: MOHAMMED ASAD***

BBMP to enforce strict rules for PGs

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is likely to implement more stringent rules and regulations in women's PG across the City. This move comes in the wake of a recent tragic incident where a young woman was murdered at a PG in Koramangala by an intruder who managed to escape.

Under the new guidelines, all PGs must now secure a corporation license. They are required to maintain detailed records, including identity cards and recent photographs of all residents and visitors.

PHOTO: PTI

Additionally, PGs must collect contact details of blood relatives and close friends of residents.

The security measures are to be heightened with mandatory installation of CCTV cameras. PGs must also adhere to fire safety protocols and prohibit the possession and consumption of drugs. Essential emergency contact numbers should be prominently displayed within the premises.

The guidelines further specify that the backgrounds of cooks, security guards, and other staff must be vetted by local police. PGs housing foreign nationals have to report their details to police station.

The PG owners are also responsible for monitoring food quality and must allow local police to conduct inspections once a month. Not adhering to the rules and leading to safety breaches will result in legal action.
—*Salar News*

Govt signs MoU to set up diabetes centres

BENGALURU, 6 AUG

Government of Karnataka has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Novo Nordisk Education Foundation (NNEF) to launch 'Changing Diabetes Barometer' (CDB) programme which aims to establish diabetes centres across the State, on Tuesday. The diabetic centres will be set up in all Community Diabetes Centres in district and sub-district hospitals, community health centres, and primary health centres." It will be held in Bengaluru Urban, Dakshina Kannada, and Yadgir. These CDCs will integrate diabetes care into outpatient services, focusing on early diagnosis, treatment and lifestyle modifications, said Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao.
—*Salar News*

State government signed the MoU with Novo Nordisk Education Foundation to launch Changing Diabetes Barometer ***PHOTO: SALAR***

LOK SABHA POLLS 2024

AICC Secy flags concerns over vote discrepancies

AKSHITA MEHTA
BENGALURU, 6 AUG

A report titled "Conduct of Lok Sabha Elections 2024" released by the Maharashtra-based civil society organisation 'Vote for Democracy' on 22 July highlighted a discrepancy of 4.65 crore votes in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. It is feared that this discrepancy could have benefitted BJP-led NDA in 79 seats across 15 states such as Odisha, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

A similar study by the Association for Democratic Reforms also noted discrepancies in 5.5 lakh votes between votes cast and counted in 362 parliamentary constituencies, suggesting issues with electronic voting machines and vote counting. Congress leader and AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan in an interview with **Salar News** raises concerns over electoral integrity and calls for a thorough investigation and reforms to ensure transparency and accuracy in the voting process.

What is your reaction to the report?
This report raises pertinent concerns. Even during the run-up to the elections, there were apprehensions about the fairness of the electoral system. This report has proved that those fears were legitimate. In a large democracy such as India, any doubts about the fairness of the electoral system and Election Commission (EC) is a grave matter.

AICC Secretary Mansoor Ali Khan ***PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD***

Will the report impact the legitimacy of the elections that have just been conducted?
The legitimacy of the election results is indeed under question today. During the elections, Muslims were allegedly not allowed to vote in Uttar Pradesh. Voter turnout is released on the day of the election or the next day but this time it was published nearly a week later. Suddenly, 4.22 crore extra votes were added.

The report found discrepancies in the votes in Bengaluru Central seat. What do you have to say about it?
As far as Bengaluru Central is concerned, Congress is doing its fact-finding on what went wrong. Citizens have complained about a sudden rise in the number of voters. Credible NGOs in Mahadevpura region have complained to EC over it. Media reports also pointed out an unusual spike in voter enrolments in Mahadevpura. EC must provide clarification. Over time, we will know more about what exactly happened, but I don't rule out electoral malpractices in the region.

Do you think this would have affected voter confidence and turnout in Bengaluru Central?
It would have affected voter turnout and the voting pattern. It was a closely fought election, and this may have had an impact on the final result as well.

Will there be an independent inquiry regarding the electoral process?
I hope it happens because this is not just about this Lok Sabha election. This has to do with the democratic process, our country, and the confidence of the voters. What good is any electoral process where there are question marks and no transparency? Even if 1% of people or even one person doubts the electoral process, the whole system fails.

Do you think this report should be discussed in the Parliament?
It is a serious issue and Parliament is a forum where this has to be debated. When we talk about the EVMs and the differences in the number of votes recorded and counted, it is a concerning issue. It is the difference between forming a government legitimately and illegitimately. I hope this report is taken up in Parliament and debated. If there is nothing wrong, then better to have an inquiry and clear the doubt once and for all.

What specific reforms would you propose to improve the electoral process?
The electoral process should be transparent and it must begin with the selection of the members of EC. We need a system where multiple stakeholders, including the Chief Justice of India, are involved to ensure transparency and independence in the working of EC. EC should be independent, and there should be no doubt regarding its authority.
—*Salar News*

BJP State President BY Vijayendra ***PHOTO: PTI***

Congress betrayed Dalits: Vijayendra on PSI's death

MANDYA, 6 AUG

Reacting to the death of a Yadgir police sub-inspector, Karnataka BJP President BY Vijayendra launched a scathing attack against Chief Minister Siddaramaiah saying that the State government has been indulging in the corruption and that the Congress party has cheated the Dalit community.

He added that Home Minister should resign, and Siddaramaiah should take moral responsibility and resign too.

During the 'Mysuru Chalo' padayatra, BJP leader Dr CN Ashwath Narayan called the Chief Minister "corrupt" and that people wanted him to quit.

"We are getting a very good response and people want this corrupt Siddaramaiah to quit. People want accountability for the corruption he has done in the State. We organised 'Mysuru Chalo' padayatra to sensitise Congress that they can't get away with corruption," Narayan said.

Earlier on Monday, Union Minister Shobha Karandlaje wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and urged for a CBI investigation into the death of police sub-inspector Parashuram of Yadgir in Karnataka.

As per a death note, Parashuram faced undue harassment and was relentlessly tortured and traumatized allegedly by Congress MLA Chenna Reddy Patil Thunnur and his son, Sunny Gowda alias Pampanagouda, which ultimately led to his unfortunate death.
—*ANI*

HASINA IN SHOCK, SAYS EAM AT ALL-PARTY MEET

Jaishankar says, the govt is giving Hasina to recover before enquiring about her future plans

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told an all-party meeting on Tuesday that Bangladeshi leader Sheikh Hasina, who has arrived in India after quitting as prime minister following extraordinary protests in the neighbouring country against her rule, was in shock at the turn of events, sources said.

The government is giving her time to recover, before enquiring about her future plans, Jaishankar said, briefing political leaders in the Parliament House.

The minister said India has spoken to the Bangladesh Army chief to ensure the safety of more than 10,000 Indian students in that country and also taken up the issue of attacks on Hindu minorities, according to a couple of leaders who attended the meeting.

Hasina has arrived in India along with some close relatives, he said, adding that the national security adviser is taking appropriate measures for their security.

An Opposition leader, who attended the meeting, said a reference was made about the instability in the neighbourhood, not in the least following the toppling of the Hasina government, which was seen as India's most dependable ally

Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, and other leaders during an All-Party meeting about the ongoing developments in Bangladesh, on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

BJP members, however, described the Budget as "historic" claiming it was aimed to make India a developed nation.\The all-party meeting was attended by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah, Health Minister JP Nadda, Janata Dal (United) leader and Union minister Rajiv Ranjan Singh "Lalan", Janata Dal (Secular) leader and Union minister HD Kumaraswamy, Gandhi, Bandyopadhyay, DMK leader TR Baalu, Samajwadi Party leader Ram Gopal Yadav and Nationalist Congress Party (SP) leader Supriya Sule, among others.

Only the leaders major parties were invited to the meeting and the decision to exclude the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which has 13 MPs, drew protest from its leaders.

Bangladesh unrest halts cross-border trade

Eastern Indian states, including West Bengal and Tripura, stepped up security measures on Tuesday and Bihar police issued an alert for some parts of the state in the wake of unrest in Bangladesh.

Cross-border trade also remained stalled through the Petrapole land port in West Bengal with reports suggesting that hundreds of Indian trucks were stuck on the Bangladesh side.

Meanwhile, in a post on X in Hindi, BSP chief Mayawati said, "In view of the rapidly changing political situation in the neighbouring country Bangladesh, today's all-party meeting is very important, in which the decision of all parties to stand by the decisions of the government is considered appropriate and necessary."

An alert has been sounded in many parts of Bihar in the wake of the unrest in neighbouring Bangladesh, a top police official said. *—PTI*

AIR INDIA RESUMES EVENING FLIGHTS TO DHAKA

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Air India will operate its scheduled flight from the national capital to Dhaka on Tuesday evening while Vistara's scheduled services to the Bangladesh capital will be operational from 7 August.

On Tuesday, Air India had cancelled its morning flight to Dhaka.

The airline will operate its evening flights AI237/238 on the Delhi-Dhaka-Delhi sector on Tuesday.

In a statement, the carrier also said that due to the prevailing situation there, a one-time waiver is being offered on rescheduling to passengers having confirmed bookings on any of its flight to and from Dhaka between 4 and 7 August. The offer will be applicable for tickets booked on or prior to 5 August.

Both Vistara and IndiGo had cancelled their Tuesday flights to the Bangladesh capital. An update from IndiGo on Dhaka flights for Wednesday is awaited. *—PTI*

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Rahul questions if Pak was involved in B'desh turmoil

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

"India is the most prominent country in South Asia. I want to know from the government when External Affairs Minister will make a statement that what are the steps the government has taken in the last few years to maintain political stability in South Asia?

-Manish Tewari, Congress MP

Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday asked External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at an-all party meeting as to whether foreign forces, specifically Pakistan, might have been involved in the developments in Bangladesh, sources said. He also asked about the government's strategy going forward in dealing with the crisis in the neighbouring country, the Congress sources said. Replying to questions from various leaders, including Gandhi, the minister did not rule out the role of foreign governments in the unrest in Bangladesh but emphasised that the situation was too fluid, and the Indian government has been keeping a watch on the evolving situation, they said. At the meeting, Gandhi asked if foreign governments, specifically Pakistan, might be involved in fuelling the crisis there, the Congress sources said. *—PTI*

Land scam: ED files chargesheet against Lalu Prasad, son

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday filed a supplementary charge sheet against ex-railway minister Lalu Prasad, his son Tejashwi Yadav and eight others in the land-for-jobs scam. The charge sheet was filed before Special Judge Vishal Gogne, who posted the matter for consideration on 13 August. The case pertains to Group-D appointments made in West Central Zone of the railways in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh during Prasad's tenure as railway minister from 2004 to 2009 in return for land parcels gifted or transferred by the recruits in the name of supremo's family. *—PTI*

Bhim Sena leader held for issuing death threat to CJI

BETUL, 6 AUG

Madhya Pradesh Bhim Sena incharge Pankaj Atulkar was arrested on Tuesday from Betul for allegedly issuing a death threat on social media to Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud in connection with the Supreme Court's judgement on reservations, a police official said. Atulkar, 34, was produced before a court which sent him to jail, said Ganj police station in-charge Ravikant Daheria. An FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Information Technology Act on Monday after Atulkar stated in a Facebook post that he would kill the Chief Justice of India for giving a "decision to enslave the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe people", which has "violated the Constitution". In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court on Thursday held that States are constitutionally empowered to make sub-classifications within the Scheduled Castes for granting reservation for socially and educationally backward. *—PTI*

LK Advani admitted to Delhi's Apollo hospital

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Senior BJP leader and former deputy prime minister LK Advani was on Tuesday admitted to a leading private hospital in Delhi, sources said. His medical condition is stable, they said. The 96-year-old, who was born in undivided India, was admitted to the Apollo hospital here today, a hospital source told PTI. In the first week of July too, Advani was brought to this facility and discharged after being kept under observation for a couple of days. He was admitted under Dr Vinit Suri, senior consultant, neurology department. Prior to that he had been admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and was discharged. *—PTI*

INDIA bloc protests against GST on health, life insurance

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

INDIA bloc parties staged a protest in Parliament premises on Tuesday to press for the rollback of 18 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on life and health insurance premiums.

MPs from various parties such as TMC, Congress, AAP and NCP (SC), among others, participated in the protest on the steps leading to the Makar Dwar of Parliament.

Carrying placards reading "Tax terrorism", the protesting MPs raised slogans demanding that the GST on life and health insurance premiums be rolled back.

Later, in a post in Hindi on X, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Today in the Parliament premises, INDIA parties demanded immediate removal of 18% GST on health and life insurance premiums as this extortion is a severe blow to our people, especially the middle class."

In a post in Hindi on X, Rahul Gandhi said, "The Modi government even collected Rs 24,000 crore from millions of common Indians who pay health insurance premiums every year by saving every penny to ensure that they do not have to bow down to anyone in case of a 'health crisis' in life." *—PTI*

INDIA bloc leaders protest in Parliament premises on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

RaGa meets SKM, discusses pressing govt over MSP

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday met a delegation of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha and discussed several issues, including pressing the government for legal guarantee for MSP and freedom from indebtedness, sources said.

The 11-member delegation met Gandhi at his office in the Paliament House complex here.

Sources said the delegation briefed him about the issues the farmers were facing in the country and stressed the demand for legal guarantee for minimum support price (MSP) and pressing the government for it. *—PTI*

FIJI HONOURS PREZ

President Droupadi Murmu was conferred the Companion of the Order of Fiji, the country's highest civilian award, from President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere on Tuesday **PHOTO: PTI**

MLA debarred after Cong's dharna in R'than Assembly

JAIPUR, 6 AUG

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani on Tuesday debarred Congress MLA Mukesh Bhakar from the assembly for six months following an overnight dharna in the Well of the House by his party legislators, who had prevented the marshals from evicting him after his first suspension a day earlier.

As the MLA refused to leave the House even when the proceedings resumed on Tuesday morning and continued shouting slogans, the speaker extended Bhakar's suspension to six months.

Devnani then adjourned the House sine die.

Bhakar's initial suspension over "indecent behaviour" in the House was only for the current session.

There was ruckus in the House again on Tuesday morning with the Congress MLAs raising slogans in the Well of the House. The speaker asked them to return to their seats but in vain.

During the protest around 11.45 am, Congress MLA Ramila Khadiya felt uneasy and the speaker adjourned the House for half an hour. Khadiya was examined by the doctors in the assembly.

After the House reassembled and Bhakar did not leave, the speaker suspended him for six months on a proposal moved by Chief Whip Jogeshwar Garg and adjourned the House sine die.

The chaos in the House on Monday erupted when Jully raised the issue of appointment of government lawyers under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and demanded a reply from the government. *—PTI*

Mukesh Bhakar **PHOTO: PTI**

Cong moves privilege motion against Chouhan

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Congress MPs Randeep Surjewala and Digvijaya Singh on Tuesday submitted a notice to move a privilege motion in the Rajya Sabha against Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, alleging that he "deliberately misled" the House and made "incorrect assertions".

In their letter to Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, the Congress leaders said during a discussion on the functioning of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare on 2 August, "misleading and incorrect assertions" were made by the minister.

The minister also asserted in the House that the previous Congress-led government did not implement the Swaminathan Commission report on the ground that it would distort the market, the Congress leaders said.

Lok Sabha member Mahua Moitra on Tuesday hit out at Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, saying she has made a mockery of people of India in the budget by doing absolutely nothing and whatever little changes are there are regressive and ill thought of.

Speaking in the Lok Sabha, Moitra criticized the budget for failing to address the needs of the common people, calling it an "elucidatory budget".

"Finance Minister has made mockery of people of India in the budget by doing absolutely nothing, whatever little changes are there are regressive and ill thought of," she added.

"Who is this budget for? The middle class makes up 31 per cent of India and the poor account for 60-65 per cent. This budget systematically strangles both groups. It is a 'save the chair' budget for this government and even that it doesn't do very well," she asserted.

Meanwhile, BJP Ghaziabad MP Atul Garg flagged the issue of rising cases of dog bites and demanded that a committee be formed to deal with the sensitive issue as children were unable to play freely amid an environment of terror due to such incidents.

NCP Rajya Sabha member Fauzia Khan on Tuesday expressed concern over the exposure of children to the violent content of online video games and asked the government to regulate the content.

As many as 453 people died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks since 2014 even as 732 of India's 766 districts declared themselves free from manual scavenging, the Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry said on Tuesday.

India has reported 53 confirmed cases of Chandipura virus --51 from Gujarat and two from Rajasthan -- as on 31 July, Union Health Minister JP Nadda told the Rajya Sabha.

The rate of conviction obtained in money laundering cases by the the Enforcement Directorate is 93 per cent, the government informed Parliament.

Opposition members on Tuesday attacked the government in the Lok Sabha alleging that the Union Budget has nothing for the salaried and middle class and seems to favour the corporates. *—PTI*

Congress MPs Randeep Surjewala and Digvijaya Singh **PHOTO: PTI**

'NEED POWER FOR QUOTA'

Jarange hints at contesting M'rashtra polls

JALNA, 6 AUG

Activist Manoj Jarange on Tuesday asked the Maratha community to prepare for the upcoming Maharashtra assembly polls, saying it has no option but to get political power if it wants reservation.

Speaking to mediapersons at Antarwali Sarati village in Jalna district, Jarange expressed confidence that Marathas would come to power in the state, after the elections which are due in October.

The activist said although he does not wish to enter politics, the necessity to secure reservation for the Maratha community might compel him to do so.

He expressed confidence that Marathas, Muslims and Dalits would bring about a significant change in the upcoming elections, comparable to the "wave" seen in the recent Lok Sabha polls.

Jarange has been demanding reservation for the Maratha community from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota. However, a number of OBC leaders have opposed it and demanded that their reservation should not be diluted.

"We have no option but to enter politics and come to power if we want to get reservation for the Maratha community," Jarange stated.

The activist predicted that new faces would emerge victorious.

While leaders are affiliated to their respective parties, "the common people are with us," he claimed.

Jarange accused Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis of inciting Maratha leaders against him.

Jarange also accused BJP leaders of attempting to incite communal riots, but asserted the Maratha community would thwart it. *—PTI*

Activist Manoj Jarange says he has no option but to get political power if Marathas want reservation **PHOTO: ANI**

Woman attempts immolation, Akhilesh attacks UP govt

LUCKNOW, 6 AUG

A 30-year-old woman suffered 90 per cent burn injuries after allegedly attempting to immolate herself in Lucknow's Vikramaditya Marg area, claiming torture by her husband and in-laws, police said on Tuesday.

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav alleged in a post on X that the woman had arrived in Lucknow for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's "janata darbar" but her failure to be heard forced her.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Lucknow Central) Raveena Tyagi said the woman -- Anjali Jatav from Unnao district and the mother of a one-year-old boy -- accused her husband and in-laws of physical and mental harassment.

Reacting to the incident, Akhilesh Yadav said in a post in Hindi on X, "For the BJP, the public is just a voter. For the BJP, the end of elections means the end of its concern for the public."

The official told PTI, "She had brought an application regarding physical and mental harassment by her husband and his family members." *—PTI*

Akhilesh Yadav **PHOTO: PTI**

Kerala Padma Shri awardee arrested for financial fraud

THRISSUR, 6 AUG

TKerala businessman and Padma Shri awardee Sundar C Menon has been arrested over complaints of alleged financial fraud in this district, police said on Tuesday. He was arrested by the district crime branch wing of the state police on Sunday and sent to the district prison here after being remanded by a local court. According to police, Menon, a recipient of the civilian honour in 2016, faced 18 cases of financial fraud in connection with accepting deposits from people in the name of two firms in which he was one of the directors. He allegedly accepted Rs 7.78 crore from various people but didn't return the money after the maturity period of the schemes, the police added. The accused committed the fraud by accepting deposits from over 62 investors, violating Reserve Bank of India (RBI) norms and cheating them by not returning the amount even after the maturity period, a police statement said. *—PTI*

ASI shoots self inside police station in north Delhi

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

A Delhi Police assistant sub-inspector died after allegedly shooting himself with his service weapon inside the Civil Lines police station in north Delhi, officials said on Tuesday. No suicide note was recovered from him, they said. Vijay, who was posted at the police station, shot himself late on Monday, an officer said. He further informed that Vijay hailed from Himachal Pradesh and joined the force in 1994. His family has been informed. Crime and forensic teams inspected the scene. It seems that he had some domestic issues, the officer said and added legal action under Section 194 (inquest) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita was being taken. *—PTI*

1 killed, 9 injured in boiler blast at a factory in Nagpur

NAGPUR, 6 AUG

A worker was killed and nine others were injured when a boiler exploded at a cement blocks manufacturing factory in Maharashtra's Nagpur district in the early hours of Tuesday, police said. The incident took place at around 3.30am at Shreeji Blocks Pvt Ltd company located in Zullar village under Mouda taluka, around 50km from here, when the victims were engaged in routine work, they said. Nandkishore Ramkrishna Karande, 40, a crane operator at the company and resident of Zullar, died on the spot, the Mouda police said. Nine other workers were seriously injured and undergoing treatment in hospital, the police said. Six houses located near the unit were badly damaged and three goats were also killed in the incident, they said. *—PTI*

Woman killed after two houses collapse in Varanasi

NEW DELHI, 6 JUNE

A 43-year-old woman was killed and nine people, including a woman police constable, were injured after two old houses in the Khoya Gali Chowk near the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi collapsed early on Tuesday, officials said. Divisional commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma said Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who represents Varanasi in the Lok Sabha, was informed of the situation. Of the seven people brought out from the rubble, one woman died, he said.A woman police constable suffered injuries on her jaw, he added. Officials said Premlata Gupta was brought out from the rubble and taken to a hospital where doctors declared her dead. Asked by reporters about claims that the owner of one house had submitted an application to the Kashi Vishwanath (temple) CEO for their house to be acquired for the temple corridor project, Sharma said construction started five years ago and was completed two-and-a-half years ago. *—PTI*

Rescue enters last stage in Kerala; death toll touches 400

The search was expanded to remote areas of Chaliyar river

WAYANAD, 6 AUG

An Indian Air Force helicopter helps in rescue operations in Wayanad onTuesday PHOTO: PTI

The search and rescue operation in the Wayanad landslide, which killed nearly 400 people, entered its final stages on Tuesday, which is the seventh day

The search operations will be more concentrated on the Chaliyar river basin with a special team on helicopter scanning the waterbody for bodies or remains.

Meanwhile, the Kerala government said the complete list of people who went missing following the landslides will be released soon.

An accurate list of missing persons is being prepared by the government, Revenue Minister K Rajan told reporters here.

He said the objective of the government is comprehensive rehabilitation of all those affected.

Kerala General Education and Labour Minister V Sivankutty said that classes will soon commence in the schools in landslides-hit Wayanad, which are being used as relief camps now and financial assistance will be provided to workers affected by the disaster.

Sivankutty said that many-schools were functioning as relief camps and after holding a meeting with teachers, PTA and other stakeholders it was decided to commence classes within 10-20 days.

Prior to commencement of classes, all basic facilities will be improved in the schools.

It also said that 276 students lost textbooks, 438 lost other study materials in the disaster.

The migrant workers will also be provided financial assistance, including for their treatment.

Sivankutty said Rs 1 lakh as a first installment will be provided to families of labourers who died in the landslides.

Authorities have turned to unmanned aerial vehicles to transport food packets to areas that remain inaccessible by traditional means. They have employed modern drones capable of carrying packets for up to 10 people at a time.

Kerala Industries Minister P Rajeev claimed that there was a "conspiracy" by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change to blame the state's policies for the landslides that hit Wayanad by soliciting anti-Kerala articles from scientists. *—PTI*

AMID RISING VIOLENCE

India issues safety advisory for Indians in UK

LONDON, 6 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The High Commission of India in London on Tuesday issued a safety advisory for Indian nationals to "stay vigilant and exercise due caution" amid ongoing violent clashes, which have targeted immigrants and asylum-seekers in parts of the UK since last week.

The advisory posted on the social media channels of the Indian mission also provides emergency contact information for anyone in need of urgent assistance. It comes a week after the fatal stabbing of three young girls in Southport, northwest England, and incorrect social media claims over the UK-born suspect's asylum-seeker status. The contact provided for India House at Aldwych, London, in case of an emergency is: +44-2078369147 and inf. london@mea.gov.in. Birmingham in the north and Plymouth in southern England witnessed the latest scenes of clashes between two sets of protesters overnight on Monday.

A man is in a serious condition in hospital after being attacked in a suspected hate crime in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and police officers were attacked with bricks in Darlington, northern England. PTI AK The British government said it has accelerated its plans to deal with prison capacity to ensure sufficient space for an expected rise in prisoners due to rioting after hundreds of arrests have been made.

The trigger of the riots lies in Southport, near Liverpool, which was the scene of the stabbing of a group of young children at a Taylor Swift themed dance class on July 29. Axel Rudakubana, 17, who has been charged with three murders and other attempted murders, was born in Cardiff, Wales, to Rwandan parents. However, initial false social media posts claimed he was a refugee who arrived last year on a small boat. *—PTI*

1 more inmate of Indore children's shelter home dies

INDORE, 6 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

A three-year-old girl from an Indore-based ashram, which was in news after the death of 10 children following the outbreak of cholera at the facility, has died during treatment in a hospital, an official said on Tuesday.

With this, 11 children from the facility have died in the last one-and-a-half months.

Preeti Malpani, superintendent of the government run Chacha Nehru Bal Chikitsalaya here, said family members of the girl inmate of Shri Yugpurush Dham Bal Ashram admitted her to the children's hospital in a very critical condition on August 3.

"The girl was then suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration," she said.

Despite all the efforts by doctors, the girl's condition did not improve and she died on Monday night, Dr Malpani said.

The girl was already suffering from malnutrition and disability, she said, adding the body has been sent for postmortem.

The ashram management claimed they handed over the girl to her family members recently, the hospital superintendent said. According to officials, a probe report by the administration recently indicated that 10 children died in the last one-and-a-half months after the outbreak of cholera in the ashram. *—PTI*

MUMBAI VARSITY ROW

SC to hear students' plea against HC verdict on hijab ban

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

Supreme Court on Tuesday said it has ordered listing of a plea challenging the verdict of the Bombay High Court which had upheld a decision of a Mumbai college to impose a ban on wearing of 'hijab', 'burqa' and 'naqab' inside the campus.

The High Court had on 26 June refused to interfere with the decision of the Chembur Trombay Education Society's NG Acharya and DK Marathe College imposing the ban, saying such rules do not violate students' fundamental rights.

It had said a dress code is meant to maintain discipline which is part of the college's fundamental right to "establish and administer an educational institution".

Taking note of submission seeking urgent listing of the appeal, a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said it has already assigned a bench for the matter and that it would be listed soon.

Lawyer Abiha Zaidi, appearing for petitioners, including Zainab Abdul Qayyum, sought urgent hearing saying the unit tests in the college are likely to commence on Wednesday.

The top court is yet to conclusively decide the legality of such diktats issued by educational institutions.

A two-judge bench of the top court, on 13 October, 2022, had delivered opposing verdicts in the hijab controversy emanating from Karnataka. The then BJP-led state government had imposed a ban on wearing the Islamic head covering in schools there. *—PTI*

SC TO SOON HEAR BENGAL'S PLEA ON SCHOOL JOBS ROW

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it would hear in September the pleas of the West Bengal government and others challenging a Calcutta High Court order that invalidated the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff in state government and aided schools.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud granted time to the parties to file their responses to the petitions by 16 August.

The top court on 7 May granted a major relief to teachers and non-teaching staff of West Bengal whose services were invalidated by the high court on the grounds of irregularities in the appointment process. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Heavy showers trigger floods in Rajasthan

JAIPUR, 6 AUG

Extremely heavy rainfall occurred in Rajasthan's Jaisalmer, Pali and Jodhpur districts during the last 24 hours, leading to flood-like situation at some places, officials said on Tuesday.

Disaster management teams, equipped with mud pumps and tankers, have been deployed in the affected areas to remove water and provide assistance to people, the officials said.

According to Meteorological Centre, Jaipur, Mohangarh and Bhaniyana in Jaisalmer district recorded 260 mm and 206 mm of rainfall, respectively, till 8:30 am.

Other areas within these districts also experienced heavy to very heavy rainfall, it said. Jaisalmer collector Pratap Singh and Superintendent of Police (SP) Sudheer Choudhary conducted field visits in rain-hit areas and took stock of the situation.

Singh said there is waterlogging at some places and civil defence, SDRF and police teams will be reaching those areas to provide assistance. *—PTI*

SC JUNKS KULKARNI'S PLEAS AGAINST UAPA IN MALEGAON BLAST

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Supreme Court on Tuesday rejected the plea filed by Sameer Kulkarni, arrested for his alleged involvement in the 2008 Malegaon blast case, challenging the sanction for prosecution granted by the Maharashtra government under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act.

A bench of Justices MM Sundresh and Aravind Kumar said it was not inclined to interfere with the Bombay High Court order which dismissed Kulkarni's plea.

The apex court on 30 April had stayed proceedings against Kulkarni before the special court. Kulkarni had moved the top court challenging the high court order dated June 28, 2023 challenging the trial in the special NIA court, Mumbai, contending that it lacks the valid sanction granted by the competent authority in accordance with Section 45 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. *—PTI*

Hindu side files SC caveat in Shahi Idgah dispute

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The Hindu litigants have filed a caveat in the Supreme Court seeking a hearing if the Muslim side approaches it challenging a recent order of the Allahabad High Court which rejected a plea against the maintainability of 18 cases related to the temple-mosque dispute in Mathura.

The caveat has been filed through advocate Vishnu Shankar Jain to ensure that no ex-parte order is passed against the Hindu litigants if the other group moves the top court.

A caveat application is filed by a litigant to ensure that no adverse order is passed against him or her without being heard.

The Court had dismissed the Muslim side's contention that the suits filed by Hindu litigants relating to the dispute over the Krishna Janmabhoomi temple and the adjacent mosque violated the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act -- and were thus not maintainable.

The mosque management committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board had argued that the suits were barred under Places of Worship Act and other laws. On 31 May, the Allahabad High Court reserved its judgment on this maintainability plea after hearing both sides.

However, the court reopened the hearing at the request of Shahi Idgah counsel Mehmood Pracha.

The High Court has now fixed 12 August as the date for framing of issues. *—PTI*

Irked CJI benches lawyer over requests for early hearing

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

"Sit here for a day. I assure you, you will run for your life," a visibly-irked Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud told a lawyer when he kept persisting for an early date of hearing in a case related to disqualification of Shiv Sena MLAs.

A bench comprising the CJI and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra was fixing dates for hearing the two separate pleas related to the Maharashtra political disputes.

The Uddhav Thackeray faction has challenged Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar's order declaring the Shiv Sena bloc led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde as the "real political party" after its split in June 2022.

The other pleas was filed by Sharad Pawar faction of the NCP challenging Narwekar's decision declaring the group led by deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar as the real NCP. *—PTI*

20 YEARS OF PURSUIT

CBI arrests offender declared dead by court

HYDERABAD, 6 AUG

In May, 2002, CBI had registered a case against the accused PHOTO: PTI

CBI has arrested V Chalapathi Rao, a proclaimed offender absconding for 20 years in a bank fraud case who was declared dead a few years ago by a court here. A press release from the premier investigating agency on Monday said V Chalapathi Rao avoided arrest by frequently changing his identity and locations.

In May, 2002, CBI had registered a case against the accused, working then as a computer operator at SBI Chandulal Biradari Branch, Hyderabad following allegations that he cheated the bank to the tune of Rs 50 lakh on the basis of fabricated quotations of electronic shops and fake salary certificates created in the names of his family members and close associates.

The accused has been missing since 2004.

His wife, who is also an accused in the fraud case lodged a complaint with the city police. She had also moved the Civil Court to declare the absconding accused as dead, seven years after he allegedly went missing.

Subsequently, an order was passed by a civil court of Hyderabad.

The accused constantly changed locations, contact numbers and identity. However, the CBI relentlessly pursued leads and finally nabbed him in a village in Tamil Nadu.

As per information gathered by CBI, the accused had fled to Salem and married a lady in 2007 by changing his name as M Vineet Kumar and obtained an Aadhaar number as well.

However, in 2014 he left Salem without any information and reached Bhopal where he worked as a loan recovery agent and then shifted to Rudrapur in Uttarakhand, where he worked in a School. *—PTI*

CBI books Hindalco for coal mine corruption after 8 yrs

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

PHOTO: PTI

The CBI has booked the country's leading aluminium producer Hindalco of the Aditya Birla Group for alleged corruption in getting environmental clearances for coal mining between 2011 and 2013, officials said on Tuesday.

The agency has also named T Chandini, the then director in the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests, for favouring the company as member secretary of the Expert Appraisal Committee ((EAC) in allowing mining in the Talabira-I mine in the critically polluted area of Odisha's Jharsuguda in violation of ministry guidelines, they said.

The central probe agency has registered the FIR after a nearly eight-year-long preliminary inquiry.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) registered the preliminary inquiry in 2016 on allegations that the Aditya Birla Management Corporation Private Limited (ABMCPL) had allegedly paid "massive bribes" between 2011 and 2013 to ministry officials for getting mandatory environmental clearance to mine coal from Talabira. *—ANI*

25 HOURS IN A DAY?

In a discovery that could redefine our concept of time, scientists have revealed that the length of a day on Earth is gradually increasing. The culprit? Our Moon, which is slowly but steadily drifting away from our planet. Research indicates that the Moon is receding from Earth at a rate of approximately 3.8cm per year. Scientists predict that in 200 million years, a day on Earth could stretch to a full 25 hours. This is a far cry from the planet's earlier days when, around 1.4 billion years ago, a day lasted just over 18 hours.

PHOTO: NASA.COM

Are Bangladesh's youth empowered to lead change?

"Inni, we are independent!" my 26-year-old cousin chanted from Shahbagh, a neighbourhood in Bangladesh's capital Dhaka, as millions joined a major protest march on Monday to the country's Parliament House.

Soon after, social media was flooded with news of "a new independence" – a free Bangladesh reborn after the autocratic leader of over 15 years, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, fled the country in the face of defiant public demand for her resignation. It was the startling culmination of weeks of unrest that resulted in some 300 deaths and thousands of arrests. Now, the young protesters who instigated the protests have a real opportunity to contribute to the political discourse in a previously discriminatory system of government. Will the interim government listen – and bring real change to the country?

Sunday marked one of the deadliest days in Bangladesh's history of civil unrest, with at least 98 people killed and hundreds injured

PHOTO: PTI

What's been happening in recent weeks?

The student protests erupted last month over a quota system that reserved 30% of government jobs for Bangladesh's 1971 liberation war veterans and their relatives. The students demanded a merit-based system, deeming the current one unfair and biased.

As the protests grew, Bangladesh's faux democratic regime totally broke down. The government cut mobile internet, imposed a nationwide shoot-on-sight curfew, and deployed the army and police to the streets.

After days of intense clashes between student protesters, police and ruling party activists, the Supreme Court reduced the quota to just 5% of jobs for veterans and their relatives. Despite this concession, protesters continued to demand accountability for those killed in the weeks of unrest. The prime minister labelled the protesters as criminals to be dealt with harshly, leading to a severe erosion of political trust. When Hasina offered to meet with student leaders on Saturday, a coordinator fervently refused. Sunday marked one of the deadliest days in Bangladesh's history of civil unrest, with at least 98 people killed and hundreds injured. As the unrest grew, Hasina's grip on power weakened until she was finally forced to flee.

Deep-seated inequality and anger

However, the economic fruits have been unevenly distributed, favouring the rich, who tend to support the Awami League. The wealthiest 10% of the population control 41% of the nation's income, while the bottom 10% receive just 1.3%.

The country's economic success failed to meet the aspirations of the younger generation, in particular. By 2023, 40% of those aged 15–29 were classified as "NEET" – which means "not in employment, education or training". University graduates have faced higher unemployment rates than their less-educated peers. The rot causes of the quota protests, therefore, ran deep. And this anger was especially pronounced for the disenchanted and politically marginalised youth. Their demands were clear: they wanted fair elections, government accountability and the restoration of democratic norms.

Bottom-up transition to democracy

In all senses, Bangladesh has not been a democracy since its 1971 independence war against Pakistan. The country has been plagued by corruption, the suppression of free speech and the press, and flagrant repression of the opposition.

This has included politically motivated arrests, disappearances and extrajudicial killings. Elections have also not been free and fair. The highly controversial election in January that returned Hasina to power for a fourth consecutive term, for instance, was boycotted by her main opponents. Many of their leaders were jailed. But the recent protests have offered hope of a bottom-up transition to democracy. Young people have played a pivotal role in bringing down Hasina's government through their sheer numbers, as well as their spirit, resilience, defiance and solidarity. They were tech-savvy, too, ingeniously navigating the internet and mobile data crackdowns to mobilise protesters, both at home and abroad. Despite being highly educated and committed to democracy, young Bangladeshis – especially young women – have been marginalised by traditional, hierarchical and patriarchal political structures. In 2022, for example, only 0.29% of parliamentarians were under 30, and 5.71% were under 40. While the road ahead is fraught with challenges, Bangladesh's youth have demonstrated their readiness to fight for their rights and their future.

—Courtesy, The Conversation

LETTERS

write to us at salar@salar.news

SALAR سالار

Air drills bring new thrust to India, Germany ties

The countdown has begun at the Indian Air Force (IAF) base in the southern town of Sulur. Dozens of combat aircraft from different parts of the world are expected to touch down here as India prepares to host its first multinational air exercise starting Tuesday.

The drills, named Tarang Shakti, will see the participation of 10 countries — including Germany — with their air assets. A total of 18 other nations are slated to take part as observers.

The IAF had extended an invitation to 51 friendly countries to participate in these international exercises, which will take place in two phases.

The first phase of the drills will be conducted from 6 to 14 August, with Germany, France, Spain and the United Kingdom war-gaming alongside India. The second phase is scheduled to take place in Jodhpur, in northern Rajasthan state, toward the end of the month and will see the participation of Australia, Bangladesh, Singapore, Greece, the United Arab Emirates and the United States.

"This exercise aims to strengthen strategic relations with our friends from the international community," AP Singh, IAF's vice chief air marshal, told reporters in New Delhi last week.

This also marks the first time the German air force will participate in military drills in India.

Eyes in the sky for German aircraft

The drills come at a time when India and Germany are looking to shore up their defense relations. The Luftwaffe will be flying in with Eurofighter Typhoon jets. Germany's participation is also making waves for its deployment of an Airbus A400M transport aircraft for the Indian exercise, as New Delhi is currently scouting the international markets for a medium transport aircraft.

Defense observers have said the war games will provide India with a unique opportunity to test out the Eurofighters and the A400M in a realistic situation with warlike fighting scenarios.

"The loading capacity of Germany's A400M is something that really stands apart. They are giving us 37 tons and if you look at the Indian tender, whatever we have required, Germany is giving us a little bit extra and that really is good for India," Swasti Rao, an associate fellow at the Europe and Eurasia Center of the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, told DW.

Rao pointed out that India is seeking to acquire a medium transport aircraft with an eye on tensions with China in the Leh-Ladakh region.

What India aims to achieve?

With the massive international exercise, India is looking to present itself as a formidable power in the Indo-Pacific region. Experts say it also reflects the shift the Indian Air Force, known for its Russia-dependent fleet, is making from a Soviet-era air force to now a more advanced air force equipped with Western military gear. The drills also give the IAF — which is the fourth-largest air force in the world — an arena to flaunt its rising prowess.

"For an intricate, multi-force exercise of this nature, great planning is involved. There are going to be large-force packages of aircraft that will be flying. It requires months and months of planning and for us the focus is to enhance the mutual understanding of the air power and realistic operations. That is what is going to be showcased in Sulur," said Chopra.

How does Germany benefit?

Germany's changing attitude toward India when it comes to building stronger defense stems partly from Russia's war in Ukraine. Berlin is also ramping up its Indo-Pacific strategy in the face of China's rising clout and muscle-flexing in the region. Against this backdrop, a defense partnership with India could be vital.

"Germany is very much interested in the Indo-Pacific. Having said that, Germany cannot do that alone because the German model is not really a model of a defense player. They have state-of-the-art defense industries but they don't really have a very strong army," said Rao.

"In recent years, the primary objective for Germany is to be here for their economic security because so much of trade goes through this region. Security, stability and freedom of operation in the region is a very crucial German national interest. Exactly the way it is for India and the rest of the friendly nations." Chopra highlighted that with the planned sorties in India, the Germans will also get an opportunity to fly against the Russian-made planes in the Indian fleet and to learn from Indian combat practices and the different tactics that the IAF follows.

—DW News

India has invited 51 friendly countries including Germany to particiapte in the drills, Tarang Shakti

PHOTO: PTI

Weightlifter Chanu eyes another medal at Paris Olympics

- While Chanu, who turns 30 on Thursday, will have one eye on her competitors' barbells, the Manipuri's main battle will be with herself at the South Paris Arena

Away from the spotlight owing to an injury-plagued buildup, Mirabai Chanu will be in focus on Wednesday when she attempts to become India's first weightlifter to win two Olympic medals but a challenging field and lingering fitness concerns stand in the way.

The lifter, who opened India's tally on the first day of the competition at the Tokyo Olympics with a sparkling silver, has kept a low profile since suffering hip tendonitis during the Asian Games last October.

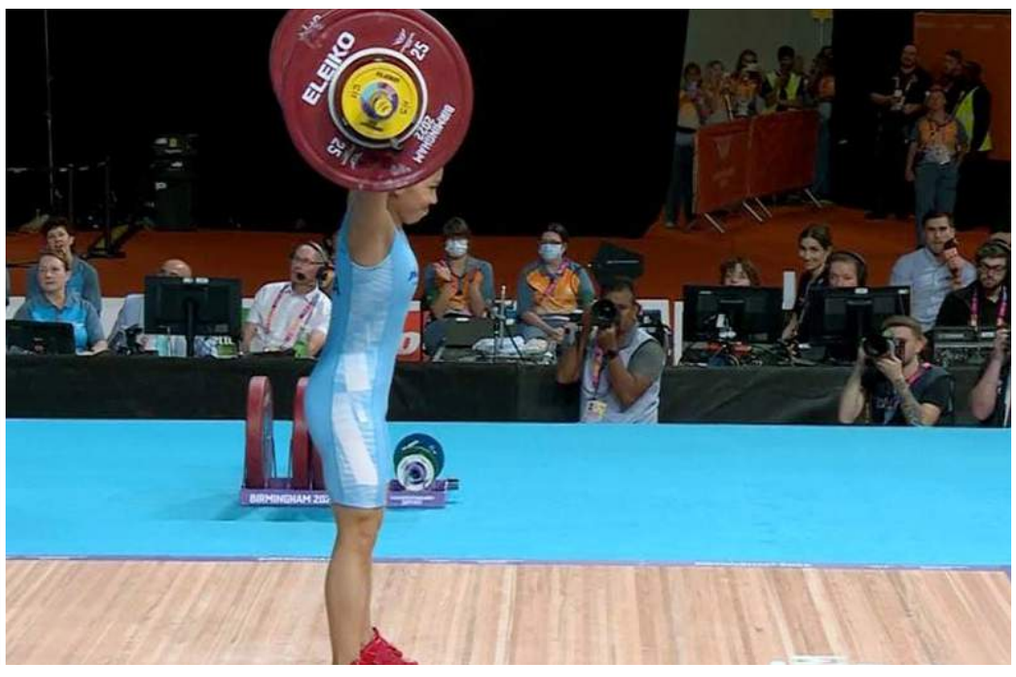
Chanu has endured a rather underwhelming Olympic cycle thanks to injury and workload management.

Her best effort since Tokyo came at the 2022 Commonwealth Games where she lifted 201kg (88kg+113kg). She had won the silver in Tokyo by heaving 202kg (87kg+115kg).

Competing in her pet 49kg weight category, Chanu is likely to be in the scramble for a silver or bronze if she matches or betters her personal best in both sections.

Reigning Olympic champion China's Hou Zhihui is the favourite to defend her title.

While there are still murmurs surrounding her fitness after she returned from a five month hiatus following the hip injury, both Chanu and chief national coach Vijay Sharma have asserted that the Manipuri has completely recovered.



The weightlifter Mirabai Chanu opened India's tally on the first day of the competition at the Tokyo Olympics with a sparkling silver

PHOTO: PTI/ANI

"We know that Mira has to go well beyond the 200kg mark. 202kg will not cut it this time but somewhere around 205-206kg should do it. But we are prepared for the challenge," coach Sharma told PTI.

However, this is easier said than done, as the 29-year-old has struggled to surpass her personal best of 88kg in the snatch, set at the 2020 National Championships, and 119kg in clean and jerk, achieved at the 2021 Asian Championships, for quite a while.

While Chanu, who turns 30 on Thursday, will have one eye on her competitors' barbells, the Manipuri's main battle will be with herself at the South Paris Arena.

Her performance in the snatch section continues to be her achilles heal and her mediocre clean and jerk performance recently also doesn't inspire confidence.

While a 90kg snatch lift continues to elude Chanu, four of her competitors have breached the coveted mark.

Having said that, Chanu has been known to be a fighter and one of the most tenacious athletes in the country.

Be it battling intense menstrual camps to win a medal in Tokyo or attempting a 117kg clean and jerk lift despite injuring herself during the Asian Games, she has shown her resolute side.

Despite the absence of North Korea's Asian Games champion and world record holder Ri Song Gum, the 49kg event is a highly competitive contest.

Chanu has set an entry weight of 200kg alongside two others -- USA's three-time Pan American champion and a world bronze medallist Jourdan Delacruz and 2021 world champion Surodchana Khambao of Thailand.

Zhihui and two-time European champion Romanian Mihaela Cambei have set entry weights of 210kg and 205kg respectively.

Chanu has been training in Paris for a month.

She also got help from American Dr Aaron Horschig, a former weightlifter-turned-physical therapist and strength and conditioning coach, who has been working with Chanu since 2020. *—PTI*

PHOTO: NDTV

Rocket attack at Iraqi army base injures US personnel

WASHINGTON, 6 AUG

Several US personnel were injured in a suspected rocket attack at a military base in Iraq, US defence officials said Monday, in what has been a recent uptick in strikes on American forces by Iranian-backed militias. The attack comes as tensions across the Middle East are spiking following the killings last week of a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon and Hamas' top political leader in Iran, in suspected Israeli strikes. Both groups are backed by Iran. The US Defence officials said troops at al-Asad air base were still assessing the injuries and damage, and it appeared that as many as seven military troops and civilians were injured. ***—AP***

Imran's party takes out rally to mark 1 year of his arrest

PESHAWAR, 6 AUG

Pakistan's jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party held a massive rally in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province on the completion of the party founder's one year in jail and pledged to make concerted efforts for his release with a similar rally in capital Islamabad by month end. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rally was held in Swabi district of the party-ruled province bordering Punjab on Monday and addressed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur besides party chairman Gohar Ali Khan and Secretary General Omar Ayub. Khan, 71, was arrested on 5 August last year and lodged at Attock jail. However, in September he was shifted to Adiala Jail at Rawalpindi. Khan, who served as prime minister of Pakistan from August 2018 to April 2022, faces over 200 cases, with convictions in a few of them. PTI leaders said the former cricketer-turned-politician cannot be kept in jail any longer as he is the leader of the biggest party of the country. They also announced to hold the party's next show of strength in the capital Islamabad "by the end of this month or in September" and declared that no authority could stop them from holding the rally. ***—PTI***

5 dead as tropical storm Debby soaks south-eastern US

NEW YORK, 6 AUG

At least five people have been killed after Hurricane Debby slammed into Florida before weakening to a tropical storm. Debby is expected to bring heavy flooding to parts of Georgia and the Carolinas in the coming days. The National Hurricane Center warned of a "life-threatening" flood threat as the "slow-moving storm" drops "torrential rains". Debby made landfall on Monday morning as a category one hurricane in the Big Bend region of Florida's Gulf Coast. In Hillsborough County – around Tampa - an 18-wheel lorry veered into a canal during the storm. The driver was found dead. In Dixie County, just west of Gainesville, officials reported that a woman and a 12-year-old were killed when their car crashed night. ***—BBC News***

B'desh President dissolves Parliament

Army carries out major reshuffle in top positions; Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan sacked

People gather in front of the ransacked Awami League's central office in the aftermath of the prime minister's resignation, in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Tuesday ***PHOTO: PTI***

DHAKA, 6 AUG

Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin on Tuesday dissolved the Parliament to make way for the formation of an interim administration, a day after prime minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country following massive protests against her government.

"The President dissolved the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) under an executive order," a Bangabhaban spokesman told PTI.

"The decision to dissolve the parliament was taken following the president's discussions with chiefs of three staff of armed forces, leaders of different political parties, representatives of civil society and leaders of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement," said a statement issued by the president's office. Officials said a full-fledged interim government is expected to be announced later Tuesday. The president's move to dissolve the parliament has cleared the way for fresh elections.

An ISKCON temple located in Bangladesh's Khulna division, was vandalised and set on fire as unrest continues. Some videos on social media that has gone viral show some Muslim communites has been guarding the Hindu temples also. Maj Gen Ziaul Ahsan, the director general of the National Telecommunication Monitoring Centre, has been relieved from service.

—PTI with agencies

US urges citizens not to travel to Bangladesh

WASHINGTON, 6 AUG

The United States on Tuesday recommended its citizens not to travel to Bangladesh, witnessing civil unrest, crime, and terrorism following the resignation and fleeing of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina. *—PTI*

Khaleda Zia finally released

DHAKA, 6 AUG

Former Bangladesh prime minister Khaleda Zia ***PHOTO: ANI***

Former prime minister and BNP Chairperson Begum Khaleda Zia has been officially released. The decision was revealed in media statement issued from Bangabhaban. The release also says the process of releasing those detained in the student movement and various cases from 1 to 5 July August has begun, with many already being freed.

However, student leaders who organised the protests want Muhammad Yunus, who is currently in Paris for the Olympics, to head an interim government. One student leader said Yunus has agreed to step in. Yunus, 83, is a well-known critic and opponent of Hasina.

He called her resignation the country's "second liberation day." *—Dhaka Trubune/PTI*

Same Islamists forced Hasina to leave: Taslima Nasreen

Taslima Nasreen ***PHOTO: BRITANNICA***

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The same Islamists who threw her out of Bangladesh have forced Sheikh Hasina to flee, says author Taslima Nasreen, exiled from the country in the 1990s following protests over her book "Lajja". On Monday, Hasina resigned and fled the country. Bangabandhu Memorial Museum of Dhanmondi 32 has become a ruin now. No memorial remains of the brutal massacre of 15 August, 1975. A Dhaka court has granted bail to over 1,000 BNP-Jamaat leaders and activists. A number of examination centres were damaged and question papers were burnt. *—PTI/ Dhaka Tribune/ Observerbd*

PHOTO: UKRAINE DEFENCE MINISTRY

French imports of Russia's liquified natural gas surge

MOSCOW, 6 AUG

Shipments of Russian liquified natural gas to France more than doubled in the first half of this year, according to new analyses of trade data, at a time when Europe has tried to pull back from energy purchases that help finance the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

Europe has restricted oil imports from Russia, but natural gas is still allowed. And while companies in France are importing the most, one analysis found EU countries overall imported 7% more Russian LNG, natural gas that has been chilled and liquified for easier ocean transport, in the first half of this year compared to the same period a year ago.

Oleh Savytskyi, a founder of nonprofit Razom We Stand, which campaigns for tougher sanctions on Russian fossil fuels, said the EU's goal of phasing out all Russian fossil fuels by 2027 was "appallingly off track." He said countries buying Russian LNG are sabotaging the continent's energy transition and contributing billions to Russia's war effort.

European governments have said banning Russian gas imports entirely would send energy and heating bills skyrocketing and industrial users of gas would suffer, too.

The analysis first came from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), a US nonprofit with a goal of speeding the world's transition to more sustainable energy. IEEFA examined data from Kpler, a shipping tracker, and ICIS, a commodity data provider, both of which also provided their own analysis.

The ministry noted that France is one of Europe's main entry points for LNG. France and Spain, with seven each, have the most LNG terminals in Europe. France was importing more Russian LNG, it was importing less from other suppliers including the United States, Angola, Cameroon, Egypt and Nigeria *—AP*

Google's online search monopoly is illegal: US

WASHINGTON, 6 AUG

A US judge has ruled Google acted illegally to crush its competition and maintain a monopoly on online search and related advertising.

The landmark decision on Monday is a major blow to Alphabet, Google's parent company, and could reshape how technology giants do business.

Google was sued by the US Department of Justice in 2020 over its control of about 90% of the online search market.

It is one of several lawsuits that have been filed against the big tech companies as US antitrust authorities attempt to strengthen competition in the industry.

This case has at times been described as posing an existential threat to Google and its owner given its dominance of the search and online advertising business.

It is unclear yet what penalties Google and Alphabet will face as a result of the decision.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

The fines or other remedies will be decided in a future hearing.

The government has asked for "structural relief" - which could, in theory at least, mean the break-up of the company.

In his decision, US District Judge Amit Mehta said Google had paid billions to ensure it is the default search engine on smartphones and browsers.

"Google is a monopolist, and it has acted as one to maintain its monopoly," Judge Mehta wrote in his 277-page opinion. Alphabet said it plans to appeal against the ruling.

Federal antitrust regulators have filed other pending lawsuits against Big Tech companies - including Meta Platforms, which owns Facebook, Amazon.com and Apple Inc - accusing them of operating unlawful monopolies.

Doing so, prosecutors said, meant other companies have not had the opportunity or resources to meaningfully compete. *—BBC News*

Cruise ship rescues 77 migrants found on sailing boat off Greek coast

ATHENS, 6 AUG

A cruise ship rescued 77 migrants found overnight in a sailboat in distress far off the southwestern coast of Greece and was transporting them to the nearest major port, Greek authorities said Tuesday.

A passing Maltese-flagged cargo ship found the boat 112 nautical miles (129 miles, 207 kilometres) southwest of the town of Pylos in the early hours of Tuesday, the coast guard said. In an operation coordinated by Greece's search and rescue authority, all those on board were picked up by a cruise ship sailing in the area and were being transported to the southern Greek port town of Kalamata, authorities said.

There were no reports of any people missing. No information was immediately available on the nationalities of those on the sailboat or where they had set out from. Greece lies on one of the most popular migration routes for people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and seeking to enter the European Union.

PHOTO:AP

Many attempt to make the short crossing from the Turkish coast to nearby eastern Greek islands in small dinghies. But with a crackdown on attempts to enter the country illegally, some prefer to skirt around Greece altogether and head directly to Italy in larger boats such as sailing or fishing boats, starting out either from southern Turkey or from north Africa.

The Greek coast guard came under intense criticism for its actions concerning the Adriana, which had been sailing in international waters but within Greece's area of responsibility for search and rescue operations.

A coast guard patrol boat and several merchant ships had been shadowing the Adriana for hours when it sank, but were unable to evacuate the passengers and prevent the massive loss of life. *—AP*

KAMALA SECURES DEMOCRATIC PREZ NOMINATION

WASHINGTON, 6 AUG

US Vice President Kamala Harris, who is of Indian and African heritage, on Tuesday formally secured the Democratic presidential nomination, becoming the first Indian-American to be nominated as a presidential candidate of a major political party.

Harris, 59, would face former US president and Republican nominee Donald Trump, 78, in the November general elections. Harris, who was abruptly thrust into the role of presidential candidate late last month after President Joe Biden withdrew from the race for the White House, was declared the 2024 presidential nominee of the ruling Democratic Party after she won enough votes from Democratic delegates in a virtual roll call.

"I am honoured to be the Democratic nominee for President of the United States. I will officially accept the nomination next week. This campaign is about people coming together, fuelled by love of country, to fight for the best of who we are," Harris had said.

Harris received 99 per cent of the votes of the pledged and automatic delegates at the conclusion of the roll call vote on Monday night. As many as 4,567 delegates from across the country cast their vote for Harris. *—PTI*

UN fires 9 staff involved in 7 Oct Hamas attack

JERUSALEM, 6 AUG

The United Nations said Monday it has fired additional staff members from its agency for Palestinian refugees after an internal investigation found they may have been involved in the Hamas-led 7 October attack against Israel.

The UN secretary-general's office announced the move in a brief statement to journalists. Farhan Haq, Deputy Spokesperson for the Secretary-General, did not elaborate on the UNRWA staffers' likely role in the attack or on the evidence that prompted its decision.

UNRWA previously fired 12 staffers and put seven staffers on administrative leave without pay over the claims. The group of nine staffers the UN announced it had fired Monday includes some from each group, said Juliette Touma, communications director for UNRWA.

The UN did not clarify how many have now been fired from the agency in total. The UN's internal watchdog has been investigating the agency since Israel in January accused 12 UNRWA staffers of being involved in the 7 October attack on Israel, in which militants killed 1,200 people and abducted some 250 others.

Israel's allegations initially led top donor countries to suspend their funding for UNRWA.

That caused a cash crunch of about USD 450 million dollars. *—AP*

PHOTO:AP

Violence grips cities across Britain

LONDON, 6 AUG

The wave of violent unrest and disorder across parts of the UK continued on Monday night as police came under attack in Belfast, Darlington and Plymouth.

Six people were arrested in Plymouth while several officers suffered minor injuries in the violence, Devon and Cornwall Police said. In South Belfast, riot officers had stones and petrol bombs thrown at them in an area close to a supermarket which was set on fire at the weekend.

Earlier, a vigil was held for the victims of a mass stabbing in Southport last week which sparked the unrest. Nearly 400 people have been arrested since the rioting began.

Children blew bubbles and others left flowers and heart-shaped balloons in remembrance of the victims of the stabbing attack at a Taylor Swift-themed holiday club. Merseyside Police have since said one child caught up in the incident remained in hospital but all other patients had been discharged.

Axel Muganwa Rudakubana, from Banks in Lancashire, has been charged with three counts of murder, 10 attempted murders and possession of a curved kitchen knife.

The 17-year-old, who was born to Rwandan parents in Cardiff, moved to the Southport area in 2013. *—BBC News*

Rioters attack hotels housing immigrants and asylum seekers in UK ***PHOTO: CNN***

HIROSHIMA DAY

'Stop relying on nuclear weapons as deterrence'

TOKYO, 6 AUG

Hiroshima officials urged world leaders Tuesday to stop relying on nuclear weapons as deterrence and take immediate action toward abolishment — not as an ideal, but to remove the risk of atomic war amid conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and rising tensions in East Asia.

They commented as Hiroshima remembered its atomic bombing 79 years ago at the end of World War II.

The memorial comes days after Japan and the US reaffirmed Washington's commitment to "extended deterrence," which includes atomic weapons, to protect its Asian ally. That is a shift from Japan's past reluctance to openly discuss the sensitive issue as the world's only country to have suffered atomic attacks.

Doves fly over the cenotaph dedicated to the victims of the atomic bombing during the annual ceremony, in Hiroshima on Tuesday ***PHOTO: AP***

Hiroshima Gov. Hidehiko Yuzaki said nuclear-armed nations and supporters of atomic deterrence "deliberately ignore ... the fact that once people invented a weapon, they used it without exception."

"As long as nuclear weapons exist, they will surely be used again someday," Yuzaki said in his address at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. The atomic bomb dropped by the United States on Hiroshima killed 140,000 people. A second bomb dropped three days later on Nagasaki killed 70,000 more. Many survivors of the bombings have lasting injuries and illnesses resulting from the explosions and radiation exposure and have faced discrimination in Japan. *—AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold plunges ₹1,100; silver plummets ₹2,200

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Gold prices plunged by Rs 1,100 to Rs 71,700 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday due to weak demand from jewellers. The precious metal had closed at Rs 72,800 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver also continued its slide for the fourth session, plummeting by Rs 2,200 to Rs 82,000 per kg on Tuesday from Rs 84,200 per kg in the previous trade, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Silver prices have fallen by Rs 4,200 per kg in the four sessions since August 2 when it traded at Rs 86,000 per kg. In addition, gold of 99.5 per cent purity dived Rs 1,100 to Rs 71,350 per 10 grams from Monday's closing at Rs 72,450 per 10 grams. Silver was also trading lower at USD 26.94 per ounce in New York. *—PTI*

Rupee recovers from all-time low, closes 16P higher

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The rupee recovered from its all-time low level and settled for the day 16 paise higher at 83.93 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, on suspected intervention by the Reserve Bank. Forex traders said mixed to weak global equities on rising concerns over recession fears in the US and the geopolitical tensions in the Middle East dented investor sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.92 and touched an intra-day high of 83.84 and a low of 83.97 against the dollar during the session. It finally settled at 83.93 (provisional) against the American currency, up 16 paise from its previous close. On Monday, the rupee slumped 37 paise to settle at an all-time low of 84.09 against the US dollar. *—PTI*

Zepto to shift headquarters to Bengaluru

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Quick commerce startup, Zepto, is planning to relocate its headquarters from Mumbai's Powai, to Bengaluru's Sarjapur, according to reports. Although Zepto currently maintains an office in Bengaluru, the company aims to centralise its corporate roles in a larger facility, streamlining operations from multiple cities into one consolidated location. Zepto, which operates its business verticals in Mumbai and has tech and product teams in Bengaluru, plans to consolidate all 1,700-1,800 of its employees into a single location. The company will cover the relocation costs for employees who choose to transfer to Bengaluru. The move is expected to incur a one-time expense of approximately Rs 3 crore-Rs 4 crore for the company, the report said. *—Agencies*

India imports 41.23L tonne of fertilisers from China in 2023

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

India imported 18.65 lakh tonne urea and 22.58 lakh tonne phosphatic and potassic (P&K) fertilisers from China during 2023-24, the government informed Parliament on Tuesday. As per the data, the country imported 70.42 lakh tonne urea in 2023-24 for USD 2.6 billion. Of this, India imported 18.65 lakh tonne urea from China valuing USD 730 million. The value of imported P&K fertilizers is not maintained in the department. India imported a total of 106.53 lakh tonne P&K fertilisers in 2023-24, of which 22.58 lakh tonne came from China. The MRP is fixed by fertilizer companies as per market dynamics at reasonable level which is monitored by the government. *—PTI*

Market pare gains to close lower, Nifty falls below 24k

Sensex settled at 78,593.07, down by 166.33 points

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Stock markets surrendered early gains and settled lower in volatile trade on Tuesday with Sensex losing 166 points and Nifty ending below the 24,000 level due to fag-end selling in banking and telecom stocks.

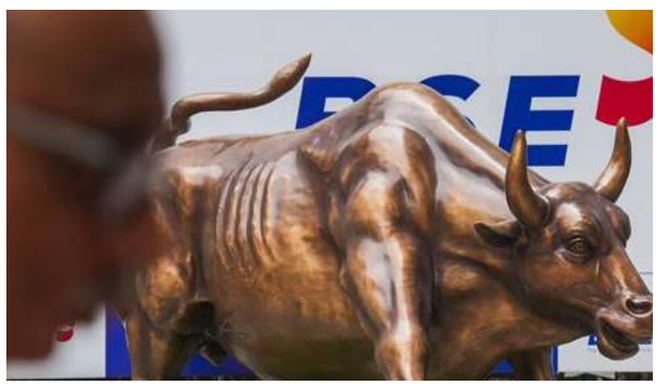
Falling for the third straight day, the 30-share BSE Sensex settled at 78,593.07, down 166.33 points or 0.21 per cent, as 17 of its constituents declined and 13 gained.

The index opened sharply higher and rallied further 1,092.68 points or 1.38 per cent to a high of 79,852.08 on value-buying by investors.

Similarly, the NSE Nifty declined 63.05 points or 0.26 per cent to settle below the 24,000 level at 23,992.55. The index surged 327 points or 1.35 per cent to 24,382.60 in intraday trade but failed to hold onto gains.

From the 30 Sensex pack, State Bank of India, Mahindra & Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, Titan, HDFC Bank, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank and Bajaj Finance were the biggest laggards.

JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Technologies and Reliance Industries were among the gainers from the pack.



JSW Steel, Tech Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Hindustan Unilever, HCL and Reliance Industries were among the gainers *PHOTO: PTI*

Japan's Nikkei 225 index soars more than 10%

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 share index soared as much as 10.7 per cent early Tuesday, a day after it plunged the most in 37 years.

In Europe, the FTSE 100 and stock markets in Paris and Frankfurt steadied.

The sharp fall in Tokyo followed the Bank of Japan's decision to raise interest rates for just the second time in 17 years. Stock markets in France and Germany also edged ahead in early trading but later fell back.

Stocks markets in South Korea and Taiwan also regained ground, rising around 3.5 per cent, after record falls.

The focus will now shift to the US where the technology-heavy Nasdaq index saw a further drop of 3.4 per cent, although that was far below recent falls.

—PTI/BBC News

VEDANTA Q1 NET PROFIT RISES 37% TO ₹3,606 CRORE

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Mining conglomerate Vedanta Ltd on Tuesday reported a 36.5 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 3,606 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2024.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 2,640 crore in the year-ago period.

The consolidated income of the company in the April-June period rose to Rs 36,698 crore over Rs 34,279 crore in the year-ago period, according to an exchange filing.

Vedanta Ltd, a subsidiary of Vedanta Resources Ltd, is one of the world's leading natural resources companies spanning across India, South Africa, Namibia, Liberia, UAE, Korea, Taiwan and Japan with significant operations in oil and gas, zinc, lead, silver, copper, iron ore, steel, nickel, aluminium, power and glass substrate. —PTI

Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia, while India is the second biggest trade partner neighbouring country in Asia *PHOTO: ANI*

'B'desh unrest will not hit India's trade balance'

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

India is a well diversified exporter and a blip in its exports to Bangladesh is unlikely to have any meaningful impact on India's overall trade position for the full year, S&P Global Ratings said .

Bangladesh is facing its worst political crisis since independence in 1971, with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigning amid massive anti-government protests.

Bangladesh Army Chief General Waqar-uz-Zaman on Monday announced that an interim government would be taking over the responsibilities.

Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia, while India is the second biggest trade partner of the neighbouring country in Asia.

India's exports to Bangladesh dipped to USD 11 billion in 2023-24 from USD 12.21 billion in 2022-23. Imports too declined to USD 1.84 billion in the last fiscal, from USD 2 billion in 2022-23.

Bangladesh crisis poses "significant concerns" for India's textile, apparel industry: CITI

Bangladesh, which is facing its worst political crisis since Independence in 1971, poses "significant concerns" for India's textile and apparel sector, particularly for companies operating factories in the neighbouring country, the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry said on Tuesday.

The domestic textile industry body believes that any supply disruption in Bangladesh will have an immediate impact on the supply chain, potentially affecting production schedules and delivery timelines of Indian firms.

It observed that Indian textile hub Tirupur, known for its robust textile and apparel manufacturing capabilities, may emerge as a key beneficiary of this shift.

Bangladesh is a crucial market for Indian textiles, serving as both a manufacturing hub and a significant export destination. *—PTI*

Farmers pay ₹32,440 crore premium under PMFBY: Govt

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan *PHOTO: PTI*

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Insurance claims of 1.64 lakh crore have been paid to farmers against Rs 32,440 crore premium paid under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Tuesday in the Lok Sabha.

Replying to a question on the scheme during the Question Hour, he said the Modi government has made it farmer-friendly by removing inconsistencies in the previous scheme.

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was introduced in the country in the Kharif 2016 season and is voluntary for the states, he added.

Under the scheme, comprehensive risk coverage for crops against all non-preventable natural risks -- from pre-sowing to post-harvest stages of crops -- at a very reasonable premium for the farmers is being provided.

Therefore, 5 times more claims have been paid out when compared to the premium paid by the farmers, Chouhan added.

It was found that the delay in insurance claim settlement happens most of the time due to states. *—PTI*

'Avg use of fertilisers at 140kg'

Average consumption of fertilisers at the all-India level stood at nearly 140 kg per hectare during 2023-24, while the consumption in Punjab was 247.61 kg per hectare, the government said. Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilisers Anupriya Patel said, "The all-India per hectare consumption of nutrients for the year 2023-24 is around 139.81 Kg whereas the per hectare consumption of nutrients for Punjab is 247.61 kg." *—PTI*

INDIA'S GOLD INDUSTRY FORMS NEW ASSOCIATION

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The Indian gold industry on Tuesday announced the formation of the Indian Association for Gold Excellence and Standards (IAGES), a self-regulatory organisation (SRO) supported by the World Gold Council.

The organisation aims to remove the trust deficit and enhance transparency within the sector.

The framework for IAGES will be independently governed and professionally managed. It will be released soon, after which memberships will be announced.

The organisation is expected to become operational by December this year or January 2025, WGC Regional CEO, India, Sachin Jain told PTI.

IAGES will be formed by national industry associations, including the Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), All India Gems and Jewellery Council of India (GJC) and Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC). *—PTI*

Retail inflation based on consumer price index (CPI) increased to a four-month high of 5.08 per cent *PHOTO: PTI*

RBI starts deliberations on monetary policy

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel started its three-day deliberations for the next set of bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectations of no change in benchmark interest rate in view of concerns on inflation and economic growth remaining steady.

The decision of the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das-headed six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will be announced on Thursday.

The MPC may also refrain from rate cut as economic growth is picking up, notwithstanding the elevated interest rate of 6.5 per cent (repo rate), said experts.

Retail inflation based on consumer price index (CPI) increased to a four-month high of 5.08 per cent in June as food items, including vegetables became dearer. The government will release the data for July later this month.

It also expects the Reserve Bank to continue with its monetary stance of withdrawal of accommodation.

According to a report of Goldman Sachs, the MPC is likely to keep the policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent on August 8.

The central bank last hiked the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in February 2023 and since then it has held the rate at same level in its last seven bi-monthly monetary policy reviews.

Last month, Governor Das had said the question of change of stance on interest rate is quite premature given the gap between current inflation and 4 per cent target.

The MPC is entrusted with the responsibility of deciding the policy repo rate to achieve the inflation target of 4 per cent, keeping in mind the objective of growth. *—PTI*

JIOFINANCE ENABLES UPI PAYMENTS IN PARIS

PHOTO: X/JIO

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Reliance arm Jio Financial Services Ltd has announced the entry of the JioFinance app in the French capital.

The move will assist Indian travelers to transact Wdigitally in the French market, the company said in a release.

JioFinance will enable international payments for buying tickets to visit the Eiffel Tower through its official website, La Tour Eiffel; as well as for in-store shopping at the iconic Parisian department store, Galeries Lafayette Paris Hausmann, the company said in a release.

The app will be experienced through a dedicated experience center inside 'India House', which has been conceptualised by Reliance Foundation, in partnership with the Indian Olympic Association.

WThe company has partnered with Visa which is the official payments partner of Paris Olympics.

Additionally, the app offers insurance advisory, providing expert guidance on insurance products to ensure comprehensive financial planning. *—ANI*

India signs bilateral air services pact with 116 countries to enhance connectivity

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

India has executed Bilateral Air Services Agreements (ASAs) with a total of 116 foreign countries. The agreements facilitate the operation of international flights between India and these nations, aiming to boost global connectivity and support economic and tourism growth.

In a recent Rajya Sabha session, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, represented by Minister of State Murlidhar Mohol, provided comprehensive details regarding India's Bilateral Air Services Agreements (ASAs) with foreign countries.

PHOTO: ANI

Contrary to the query's specifics, the ASAs do not designate individual airports as points of call (PoC). Instead, the agreements typically specify cities as points of call.

The cities designated under these agreements include Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Aurangabad, Bagdogra, Bangalore, Bhubaneshwar, Calicut, Chennai, Cochin, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Delhi, Gaya, Goa, Gorakhpur, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Khajuraho, Kolkata, Lucknow, Madurai, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Port Blair, Pune, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchirappalli, Varanasi, and Vishakhapatnam. .

The standard practice in international aviation agreements is to designate specific cities rather than states to facilitate international flights. *—ANI*

'GST notice to int'l airlines may dampen India's aviation'

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Global airlines' grouping IATA on Tuesday raised concerns over show cause notices issued to some foreign airlines operating to India with respect to Goods and Services Tax (GST), saying the issue can dampen and risk the country's strong aviation potential.

Urging the government to resolve the matter, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said it is disappointed that the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has proceeded to issue show cause notices to some foreign airlines operating to India despite a number of representations made by the industry on this matter.

IATA represents more than 330 airlines, including Indian carriers, and its members account for more than 80 per cent of the global air traffic.

As many as 10 foreign airlines are under the scanner of DGGI and the carriers received notices since October 2023. The statement from IATA also comes at a time when concerns have been expressed over GST demand received by IT major Infosys.

On 1 August, apex IT body Nasscom said the latest tax demand reflects a lack of understanding of the industry's operating model and sheds light on sector-wide issues wherein multiple companies are facing avoidable litigation and uncertainty. *—PTI*

'CHATGPT BETRAYED AIMS'

Musk sues OpenAI, Altman

LOS ANGELES, 6 AUG

Elon Musk filed a lawsuit on Monday against OpenAI and two of its founders, Sam Altman and Greg Brockman, renewing claims that the ChatGPT-maker betrayed its founding aims of benefiting the public good rather than pursuing profits.

The lawsuit, filed in a Northern California federal court, called Musk's case a "textbook tale of altruism versus greed."

Altman and others named in the suit "intentionally courted and deceived Musk, preying on Musk's humanitarian concern about the existential dangers posed by artificial intelligence," according to the complaint.

PHOTO: PTI

Musk was an early investor in OpenAI when it was founded in 2015 and co-chaired its board alongside Altman.

The Tesla CEO dropped his previous lawsuit against OpenAI without explanation in June.

"As we said about Elon's initial legal filing, which was subsequently withdrawn, Elon's prior emails continue to speak for themselves," a spokesperson for OpenAI said in an emailed statement. In March, OpenAI released emails from Musk showing his earlier support for making it a for-profit company.

Musk claims in the new suit that he and OpenAI's namesake objective were "betrayed by Altman and his accomplices." *—PTI*

COUNTRIES				
1. China	22	19	14	55
2. US	21	30	28	79
3. Aus	14	12	8	34
4. France	13	16	19	48
59. India	0	0	3	3

Aditi Ashok PHOTO: PTI

ADITI, DIKSHA CHASE FOR OLYMPIC GLORY

PARIS, 6 AUG

Aditi Ashok will be determined to make up for her 'near-miss' at the Tokyo Games in Round 1 of Paris events, while Diksha Dagar will look to overcome the trauma of a car accident as the two Indian golfers begin their campaign on Wednesday.

Two-time Olympian Aditi had come agonisingly close to securing a medal before finishing fourth three years ago in Tokyo and will seek redemption this time.

Diksha, on the other hand, escaped unhurt after being involved in a car accident that left her mother hospitalised. But the 23-year-old Jhajjar has shrugged off all problems and is determined for success.

A quarter of the field, which means 15 out of 60 players, in the women's Olympic golf competition have played in all three Games since the sport returned to the programme in 2016 and Aditi is one of them.

Aditi tees off with Gaby Lopez (Mexico) and Esther Henseleit (Germany) at 9.22 am local time (12.52 pm IST), while Diksha plays with Wei-Ling Hsu (Chinese Taipei) and Emma Spitz (Austria) from 10.55am. —*PTI*

NEERAJ DOES IT IN STYLE, QUALIFIES FOR FINAL

PARIS, 6 AUG

Defending champion Neeraj Chopra turned on the style as he stormed into the men's javelin throw final of the Olympic Games with a season's best effort of 89.34m in his very first attempt in the qualification round here on Tuesday.

Much like his qualifying round performance in the Tokyo Olympics, the 26-year-old crossed the automatic qualifying mark of 84m in his opening throw to occupy the top spot in Group B.

Chopra, also the reigning world champion, topped the qualification round -- combined of Group A and B -- with his monster throw.

Two-time world champion Anderson Peters (88.63m) of Grenada was second in Group B and he was second overall also.

Julian Weber of Germany, who won Group A with 87.76, was third overall, while reigning Commonwealth Games champion Arshad Nadeem of Pakistan also qualified for the finals with a throw of 86.59m in Group B.

Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Jakub Vadlejch of Czech Republic, who was the only man to have beaten Chopra this year in Doha Diamond League, was seventh overall with a first round throw of 85.63m.

The other Indian in fray, Kishore Jena, bowed out of contention to make the 12-man final on Thursday after managing a poor throw of 80.73m. He finished ninth in Group A and 18th overall.

In the final, Chopra will have a chance to become only the fifth man in Olympic javelin throw history to defend the title.

If he wins gold, and for that matter a medal, he will become the most decorated Indian in Olympics in individual sport. —*PTI*

Dominic Lobalu PHOTO: X/@ON_RUNNING

An orphaned refugee planning to make history

PARIS, 6 AUG

Two months ago Dominic Lobalu thought he would not be able to compete at Paris 2024, but now he has the chance to make history. The 25-year-old was ruled out of the Tokyo 2020 Games after claiming asylum in Switzerland, making him ineligible to compete for refugee teams.

After being given clearance by World Athletics to represent his adopted nation in May - despite not holding Swiss citizenship - Lobalu won two medals at the European Championships the following month.

In 1998, Lobalu was born into a country in the middle of a long-running civil war. But two years after the war Lobalu's home village was raided by soldiers. The family fled but he was separated from his parents.

He wound up in an orphanage and then, at the age of nine, made it across the border to Kenya with the help of an Italian NGO. In 2019, Lobalu travelled to Geneva to compete in a 10km race. Six weeks before the Paris Games, the IOC declined to allow Lobalu to compete for Switzerland. —*BBC News*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Don't throw players under the bus, says Ponnappa

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

The legendary Prakash Padukone's criticism of athletes' efforts after Lakshya Sen's shocking loss in the bronze medal play-off of the Paris Olympics has divided the badminton fraternity, with doubles player Ashwini Ponnappa saying that his comments amount to "throwing the player under the bus."

Disappointed by the loss, his mentor Padukone said it's high time that players learn to withstand pressure, take responsibility, and deliver results after receiving significant support from the government.

However, Ponnappa, who recently exited the women's doubles competition with partner Tanisha Crasto, didn't agree with Padukone's comments. "Disappointed to see this. If a player wins, everyone jumps on the bandwagon to take credit, and if they lose, it's just the player's fault?!" Ponnappa said. —*PTI*

VINESH SHOCKS CHAMPION SUSAKI

PARIS, 6 AUG

Vinesh Phogat pulled off the biggest upset at the Paris Games by outwitting hitherto invincible Yui Susaki with a perfectly planned strategy before edging past Ukraine's Oksana Livach to storm into the women's 50kg semifinal as she inched closer to an elusive Olympic medal, here Tuesday.

The Tokyo Games gold medallist and four-time World Champion Susaki had not lost any of her 82 bouts in her international career but the Japanese top seed hardly had an idea as to what was about to hit her in the opener which she lost 2-3.

Later, Vinesh quelled the challenge of former European champion and 2018 world championship bronze-medallist Livach 7-5 in the quarterfinal. Having endured two Olympic heartbreaks, the feisty 29-year-old, is now only one win away from ensuring her maiden Olympic medal.

Vinesh has every medal in her cabinet which includes three CWG gold, an Asian Games title, eight Asian Championship medals to go with two World Championship bronze but Olympic success eluded her both times in Rio and Tokyo. "It's a miracle, no less than a miracle what Vinesh has done today. It was such a sad Monday due to Nisha's injury but Vinesh has lightened up the day," India's national coach Virender Dahiya said before leaving for Anitm Panghal's draw. —*PTI*

"Vinesh Phogat is the lioness of India who won back to back matches today. Defeated 4-time World Champion and defending Olympic champion. After that he defeated the former World Champion in the quarterfinals

—Bajrang Punia, Wrestler

"I told Harvinder who is with her to watch out for the Japanese opponent's leg attack strategy so you have to defend well in the first round and that is what she did, so I am glad she won and the whole nation is proud of her

—Mahavir Phogat, Uncle of Vinesh Phogat and coach

KEY EVENTS

WEIGHTLIFTING | 11.00 PM

WOMEN'S 49 KG

Mirabai Chanu

Chanu won the Silver medal at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in the Women's 49 kg event.

TABLE TENNIS | 1.30 PM

INDIA VS GERMANY

Sreeja Akula, Manika Batra and Archana Girish

GOLF | 12.30 PM

ROUND 1 | WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL

Aditi Ashok

Ashok wins the 2022 Asian Games

World Aquatics made the decision to cancel the exercise at an early morning meeting PHOTO: PTI

Swim test cancelled over water quality issues

PARIS, 6 AUG

A test run meant to allow Olympic athletes to familiarise themselves with the marathon swimming course in the Seine River was cancelled on Tuesday over concerns about water quality in the Paris waterway.

World Aquatics made the decision to cancel the exercise at an early morning meeting, the organisation said in a statement. Fluctuating bacteria levels in the long-polluted waterway have been a constant concern throughout the Games with the swimming portion of the triathlon and the marathon swimming events both scheduled to be held in the river.

Another marathon swimming test event is scheduled for Wednesday, and organisers will decide early that morning whether it will go forward, the statement said. The women's marathon swim is set for Thursday, while the men are scheduled to race Friday.

World Triathlon released data Tuesday showing that when the triathletes swam Monday, the levels of fecal bacteria E. coli and enterococci were within acceptable levels for the length of the triathlon relay course.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, who took a highly publicised swim in the Seine last month to allay fears about water quality ahead of the Olympics, echoed that confidence. —*AP*

GREEK ATHLETE TESTS POSITIVE FOR BANNED SUBSTANCE

ATHENS, 6 AUG

A Greek athlete at the Paris Games has tested positive in a doping test and has been asked to leave the athletes' village, Greece's Olympic committee said in a statement. The Hellenic Olympic Committee said it was informed of the positive result by Greece's anti-doping agency. The athlete was automatically given a temporary ban. The HOC did not identify the athlete or which sport they were competing in. —*AP*

MEDAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Germany's Christian Kukuk wins Olympic equestrian jumping gold; American Caroline Marks wins surfing gold; American Kauli Vaast of France won the Olympic surfing titles in Paris on Wednesday

PHOTOS: X/ @JUDITHFAHERTY/@CAROLINE_MARKS3/@EQUIPEFRA

INDIA VS SRI LANKA TOUR

'Final ODI is a chance to be ready for Champions Trophy'

COLOMBO, 6 AUG

India all-rounder Washington Sundar feels the must-win third and final ODI against Sri Lanka will provide them a big opportunity to counter the spin threat in challenging conditions and hold the team in good stead ahead of next year's Champions Trophy.

The Indian team is staring at its first bilateral ODI series defeat against the Islanders in 27 years after losing the second ODI by 32 runs, thanks to the lackluster performance of the batters, who failed to tackle the Lankan spin attack.

"I think whatever we have done in this series so far, we will take that as a learning, obviously try and move ahead and win the game tomorrow in all aspects of the game."

Sundar also came out in defence of the batters, who looked shoddy against the spinners in the series so far. "We are quality players of spin. We've always played in these kinds of wickets, even at home, in Test matches, and in different formats. Even domestic cricket, we play a lot of games in such wickets," he said.

The 24-year-old said the team has tried to make tactical changes after getting inputs from new head coach Gautam Gambhir. —*PTI*

Rishabh Pant during a practice session at the R Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo on Tuesday PHOTO: PTI

Guido Rodriguez joins West Ham United

LONDON, 6 AUG

Premier League outfit West Ham United announced the signing of World Cup and two-time Copa America winner Guido Rodriguez. The Argentinian midfielder will join West Ham on a free transfer following his departure from Spanish club Real Betis. He has earned 30 caps for Argentina and started his career with River Plate. He went on to win the Mexican league and cup titles, playing alongside Edson Alvarez at Club America. During his time in La Liga, he won the Spanish Copa del Rey with Manuel Pellegrini's Real Betis in 2022. After signing for the club, Rodriguez stated that that West Ham was the right club for him, and he is looking forward to playing with his former teammate Alvarez again. Rodriguez will be the ninth Argentine to represent West Ham, after Mauricio Taricco, Lionel Scaloni and others.—*ANI*

PHOTO: SPORTSCAFE

Harris appointed as head coach of South Australia

NEW DELHI, 6 AUG

Former Aussie fast bowler Ryan Harris has been appointed as the new head coach of South Australia by replacing Jason Gillespie, according to ESPNcricinfo. After becoming the new head coach of South Australia, Harris said that he was thrilled and honoured to be named the new head coach. The former Aussie cricketer added that he knows the squad and knows what they are capable of. The newly appointed head coach added that they will be working hard to ensure that they start performing as soon as season starts. —*ANI*

Kabaddi league announces list of retained players

MUMBAI, 6 AUG

The Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) announced the 'Elite Retained Players', 'Retained Young Players' and 'Existing New Young Players' for Season 11 on Tuesday.

Dabang Delhi KC have retained their raider duo of Ashu Malik and Naveen Kumar. Meanwhile, the 'Most Valuable Player' award winner in Season 10 - Aslam Inamdar has been retained by Puneri Paltan. Furthermore, the Jaipur Pink Panthers have retained their star raider Arjun Deshwal.

A total of 88 players were retained across three categories with 22 from the Elite Retained Players (ERP) category, 26 in the Retained Young Players (RYP) category and 40 in the Existing New Young Players (ENYP). The non-retained players, which include star players such as Pawan Sehrawat, Pardeep Narwal, Maninder Singh, Fazel Atrachali and Mohammadreza Shadloui Chiyaneh will go under the hammer at the PKL Season 11 Player Auction from August 15-16, 2024 in Mumbai.

The base prices for each of the categories are Category A - Rs 30 Lakh, Category B - Rs 20 Lakh, Category C - Rs 13 Lakh, Category D - Rs 9 Lakh. The Season 11 Player Pool will consist of 500-plus including the 24 players from the two finalist teams of the Khelo India University Games 2024. —*ANI*

- A total of 88 players were retained across three categories with 22 from the Elite Retained Players category